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1955

EDEN

THE MAKING OF A STATESMAN

Also by Alan Campbell-Johnson

GROWING OPINIONS (Edited)

PEACE OFFERING

VISCOUNT HALIFAX

MISSION WITH MOUNTBATTEN

EDEN

THE MAKING OF A STATESMAN

By ALAN CAMPBELL-JOHNSON
C.I.E., O.B.E.

IVES WASHBURN, INC.
New York

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

THIS book is not in any sense a substitute for the final verdicts, pious memorials, or intimate revelations of history; it is not intended to be. The primary purpose of writing about a living statesman is to try to satisfy public interest in his future from a study of his past, and to select the present point or points in his career where such an appraisal can be usefully made.

Within these legitimate terms of reference and from my study of the political development and prospects of Anthony Eden, I began to prepare, a year or so ago, a fresh appreciation of his life and work. I first set myself this task in 1938, following upon Eden's dramatic resignation from the Chamberlain Government. I was working at the time for Sir Archibald Sinclair, now Lord Thurso, and then Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. From this central vantage point I was closely interested in the national and international repercussions of this event—perhaps the most highly charged personal decision taken by a British statesman between the wars. While Eden's Party loyalties were undisturbed, his attitude to the appeasement policy of the day transcended Party considerations. Sinclair and Eden in the field of foreign affairs, which dominated the political scene, were thus brought ideologically close together, and my own interest in the Conservative Eden flowed quite naturally from my Liberal activities and studies.

In a most illuminating article on Eden written for the *Strand* magazine early in 1939, Winston Churchill—himself politically isolated—wrote, "He is the only representative of the mutilated generation who has achieved a first-class political position and has held high and dominant office with significance and distinction. His career and its interruption are therefore of par-

ticular interest to the increasingly large public who concern themselves with national affairs."

Seventeen years have since elapsed—of blood, toil, tears and sweat, of total victory in coalition, of Opposition and disenchantment, of cold war and prodigious diplomatic effort. As with the interruption of his career in 1938, so now with its consummation in 1955, the purpose of this book remains substantially the same—to try to knit together the main events in a life still large with promise for the British people and the world.

He is the twelfth man to attain the premiership in the twentieth century, and only the third to do so in the past fifteen years. At fifty-seven he reaches 10 Downing Street close to the average age of his august predecessors; Asquith and Baldwin were both fifty-six, and Lord Salisbury fifty-five, when they formed their first administrations. Balfour became Prime Minister at fifty-four, and Lloyd George at fifty-three. Churchill and Attlee, who have monopolised the stage for so long, both had to wait until their sixties before supreme office came their way.

Although the residual power of the office grows or contracts according to the personality of the particular Prime Minister, it is in general safe to say that the race only goes to men who have the stuff of leadership in them. Eden has reached the summits on his own merits, but also under the protecting shadow of one of the greatest men in British history. How will he handle the Churchillian inheritance? Will there be a devolution of power? Will the specialist in foreign affairs, the diplomatic virtuoso, have the capacity to grow with his greatest job? Will he master the complex and threatening industrial and economic situations confronting him? The answers to these and many other crucial questions still lie ahead of him and of us.

It is difficult for me to give adequate acknowledgment to many friends in politics, journalism and the Civil Service who, wittingly or otherwise, have at various times thrown light for

me on some facet of Anthony Eden's career. They have all helped to build up for me impressions which themselves illuminate events.

I would, however, like to pay particular tribute to Mr. Jossleyn Hennessy for invaluable help covering the period of Eden's recent term of office as Foreign Secretary. I also wish to thank Mr. T. F. Lindsay for his guidance through the war and immediate post-war period, and Mr. Mackenzie Harvey for advice in regard to the earlier periods and the treatment I had previously accorded to them.

For the period of the war, Sir Winston Churchill's monumental six-volume work *The Second World War* is, and is likely to remain, the supreme primary source. The picture given there of Eden's role in the higher direction of the war is already part of his claim on history. I am grateful to the author and his publishers for permission to include various direct quotations from Sir Winston's books in this narrative. No amount of paraphrase or indirect reference could do justice to them.

I am also indebted for permission to quote from *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, by Robert E. Sherwood; *Letter from Grosvenor Square*, by John G. Winant; *Old Men Forget*, by Duff Cooper; and *My Three Years with Eisenhower* by Captain Harry C. Butcher, U.S.N.R.

ALAN CAMPBELL-JOHNSON

Westminster, April, 1955

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EDEN

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CHAPTER 1

OTHER EDENS

WINDLESTONE HALL, near Bishop Auckland, in County Durham, has been the home of the Edens for almost four hundred years. The house itself as an early topographer remarks, "is seated on an easy inclination of the hill, with an eastern aspect." The old hall, that went back to the seventeenth century, is gone: it was rebuilt in the thirties of the last century by Sir Robert Johnson Eden, who laid out the new building "on a handsome plan, with extensive offices, and plantations." It is this house which Anthony Eden's grandfather saw when he rode over one moonlight night to view the property to which he had suddenly succeeded. Sir Timothy Eden—Anthony's elder brother—paints the scene for us: "On the brow of the hill a long, low, porticoed house stood empty in the moonlight. A park, crossed by a silver chain of ponds and splashed here and there with inky shadows on its grey grass, swept up to a sunk fence where a close-cropped lawn fell away from the house to meet it. Behind the dull ochre mass of the building a further hill stretched upwards yet to a crest of wind-torn beeches."

As early as 1413 we find record of a Robert Eden in the Ferryhill district where once roamed the famous braun (or boar) of Brancepath, which, according to the legend, was valiantly slain by Hodge of Ferry. Surtees, the county historian, referring to the Preston estate of the Edens, two miles south of Stockton-on-Tees, calls it "the cradle of the Edens," and it may be that this was their original home.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Edens' lands and connections spread out in the County Palatine. In 1672 Charles II created the Eden baronetcy. One of

the most eminent members of the family was William, third son of the third baronet, himself to become the first Lord Auckland. With Auckland, who was born in 1742, the family's interests and influence widen and they identify themselves with political and social problems at the national level. An Eden tradition in the field of foreign affairs and social reform is established. At the age of twenty he was an Under-Secretary of State. Thereafter his duties brought him into direct contact with the American Revolution and reform of the East India Company. As the confidant and special envoy of Pitt he successfully completed "difficult and intricate" negotiations which culminated in the great commercial treaty with France.

Although relations between the two men ultimately became somewhat strained it was reputed that Pitt was at one time in love with Auckland's eldest daughter. In diplomatic skill and outlook Auckland's career set a precedent for Anthony Eden's. A portrait of Auckland also shows that there is an inheritance of good looks in the Eden family. He comes down to us in his prime as a man of slim physique and regular features, strong but not aggressive—the epitome of the well-moulded man of fashion.

The services and influence of the House of Eden were not confined to the first Lord Auckland—brothers, nephews, sons, and daughters all helped to add lustre to the name. His eldest brother, the third baronet, Sir John Eden, was M.P. for Durham in two Parliaments; the second, Sir Robert Eden, became Governor of Maryland, which brought with it a baronetcy; while his marriage to Caroline Calvert conferred on all his descendants the peculiar status of Counts and Countesses of the Holy Roman Empire.

Lord Auckland was a pioneer of the cause of penal reform, and his nephew, Sir Frederick Morton Eden was author of *The State of the Poor*, one of the great classics of economic literature, a pioneer work subjecting the poverty in his midst to the disciplines of fact-finding and profound problem analysis.

While idealism is a strong feature of the Eden tradition, a capacity to translate faith into works is equally in evidence. The quiet detached scholar advocating at the end of the eighteenth century widespread development of friendly societies to alleviate distress, was to put his theories to the test by founding, and subsequently becoming chairman of, the Globe Insurance Company.

In the career of the first Lord Auckland's second son, who in due course had an earldom conferred upon him, the family's stake in public service was maintained and even extended. Once again the journey to politics was made by way of Christ Church and the bar, but following on his father's breach with Pitt and the Tories he imbibed Whig ideas, becoming a leading spokesman of Whig opposition to the reactionary Liverpool administration. He was in turn President of the Board of Trade in Grey's famous Reform Cabinet, First Lord of the Admiralty and then Bentinck's successor as Governor General of India. One prominent contemporary summed up Auckland as being "with the sole exception of Lord John Russell, by far the ablest member of his party, his terms most statesmanlike, and his government of India particularly just."

Two of Auckland's sisters accompanied him to India, and while he administered they entertained. One of them (Emily Eden) described the day-to-day life in a diary of more than usual wit, charm, and literary style; the MS. was dedicated to her nephew, Lord William Godolphin Osborne, and published in 1866, nearly twenty years after the Indian grand tour she describes. "You and I," she writes, "are now almost the only survivors of that large party that in 1838 left Government House for the Upper Provinces. . . . Now that India has fallen under the curse of railroads and that life and property will soon become as insecure there as they are here, the splendour of a Governor-General's Progress is at an end. The Koobut will become a Railway Station; the Taj, will, of course, under the sway of an Agra Company (Limited, except for destruction), be bought up for a monster hotel, and the Governor-General

will dwindle down into a first-class passenger with a carpet-bag." Miss Eden lived on, delicate and formidable, to see Victorian progress sweep aside the world of her youth. The journey from Whig to Radical, from Holland House to Manchester, was one she did not undertake; but in this travel book, and in two delightful novels, she provides what is virtually an indispensable picture of a dead dynasty. Miss Eden's first novel, *The Semi-detached House*, was published in 1859 and was an immediate best-seller. The second, *The Semi-attached Couple*, was actually written in 1834, twenty years after *Pride and Prejudice*, with a plot based largely on it.

In 1928 Anthony Eden contributed an introduction to a special edition of *The Semi-detached House*, in which he refers to Emily's social position, her virtues and limitations and diffidently offers to the public a little book which he hopes may bring to readers some of the pleasant ease which it describes. In an appreciation of Eden when he first became Foreign Secretary, the *New York Times* praised him for displaying in his preface, "A sure literary touch." *The Semi-detached House*, Anthony Eden concludes, "cannot be acclaimed as a work of genius. Its writing formed the pastime of a woman of fashion when fashion was the world. Emily Eden—clever, well-read, a good letter-writer, and a witty conversationalist—found her books a pleasant exercise. Those who read her books again may enjoy with her the leisured ease of the age of which she wrote, and may spend with her a passing hour among those whose lives were cast in pleasant places. If they lived in glass houses, have we the right to cast a stone?"

In 1873, after the usual genealogical adventures, the baronetcy came down to William Eden, who had been the second of a family of eleven, and it must have seemed that the House of Eden was well preserved against extinction. But of all these eleven children it was only Sir William who perpetuated the succession, the others either dying young or without issue.

Sir William's marriage to Lady Sybil Grey was in every sense of the term a brilliant match. The Greys and Edens, colleagues

in the political struggle for Reform, were now to be more closely linked. On the Eden side there were already affinities with such historic houses as the Widdingtons, Sheffieldes, Veres, Kenes and Fairfaxes. Through the Greys the circle was widened to include the Mowbrays, Howards and Nevilles. This brief catalogue of Anthony Eden's ancestry reveals a formidable inheritance. In the person of his father there was almost too generous an endowment. Sir William's very superfluity of gifts and variety of character must have been more than a little overwhelming to the children, who were subjected to sudden alternations of hurricane and halcyon temperament that even Sir William's adult friends found trying. The handsome, wealthy sportsman and aesthete, he was in himself passionate, wilful, obstinate, erratic, and of almost morbid sensitivity of eye and ear. The sight of red flowers in a garden, the yelping of a dog, the smell of whisky or tobacco were excruciatingly painful to him, as were the voices of children, and he often expresses in his letters sentiments quite Herodian in their ferocity. But if he was eccentric in some things, he was equally talented in others. For instance there is no question of the excellence and seriousness of his painting. He was an accomplished artist whose works justly found a place in the exhibitions of the New English Art Club, the most progressive of the art societies of that time. His water-colours in particular show an extreme delicacy of feeling. It is perhaps not surprising that in as far as his reactions to people betray a similar nicety his circle of intimates, never large, became over the years more and more restricted.

Sir William, however, was much more than the hypersensitive artist. He was a practical man of affairs, running a large estate. He was also a fine sportsman: indeed it is said that there was not a better man to hounds in the north of England. He was three times master of the local hunt, and his shooting parties were famous, not least for the host's occasional storms of temper.

One might well feel proud in later life of a parent who had

stood up to Whistler; but to his children he must have remained incomprehensible and distant in spirit. It is true he taught his children many things, and well; but it was, one suspects, by numbers in the manner of the gymnastics instructor.

Lady Eden looks out at us from the canvas of Herkomer and from the water-colour by her husband. The Whistler portrait—the object of the famous dispute between Sir William and the artist—was tragically destroyed. In her poise and grace and in the serenity of her expression one is tempted to read greater depths of character than is usually attributable to the lovely sitters to fashionable artists. It is easy to appreciate why she was acknowledged as one of the outstanding beauties of her time. Lady Eden's father, Sir William Grey, who had been in turn Lt.-Governor of Bengal and Governor of Jamaica, was grandson of the first Earl Grey, brother of the statesman of the Reform Bill. Lady Eden provided the steadiness and tranquillity of temperament without which life at Windlestone would have been an unnerving and wholly unpredictable experience for the children.

Such was Eden's inheritance, formidable, almost overpowering. To belong to these ruling houses and in particular to be connected with the Whig dynasties, was to succeed to a sense of values admirably summed up by the historian Keith Feiling. He is referring specifically to the Holland House Whigs, but the words apply with equal force to the Edens of Windlestone: "If," he writes, "their standard of birth was in any sense a vice, it was then a vice which lost half its grossness. It might token selfishness, individual desire, a wish for power. But it announced also that the only justified and prudential power was rule over free men; that the very criterion of enduring aristocracy was that it was open, and not closed; that man was born free, although only his proved and attested leaders should break his chains."

CHAPTER 2

FROM WINDLESTONE TO WAR

ROBERT ANTHONY EDEN was born at Windlestone on 12th June, 1897. It is recorded that it was the hottest day the year had known, with a sun-temperature of over a hundred and twenty degrees. At the time Sir William and Lady Eden had already two sons: John, who was nearly nine, and Timothy Calvert, aged four, as well as a daughter Elfrida Marjorie, who was ten. A younger brother, Nicholas, was born in 1900. The eldest son, John, as a lieutenant in the 12th Lancers, went out to France in the very beginning of the War at the age of twenty-six and was killed on 17th October, 1914. Timothy Calvert, the author of the brilliant little monograph on his father, thus succeeded to the baronetcy on Sir William's death in 1915. When war broke out he was interned in Germany at Ruhleben for two years, but returned to England in 1916, and as a lieutenant in the Yorkshire Light Infantry fought on the Western Front from 1917 to 1919. William Nicholas, the fourth son, served as a midshipman in the Navy, and was killed at the battle of Jutland when still only sixteen years of age.

Lady Eden's recollections of Anthony's childhood are unfortunately brief. "He was always the quiet one. They say that famous men are often the most mischievous as boys, but Anthony was never that. He never gave me a moment's trouble. He was, and he remains, the kindest of sons. He wasn't keen about games, though he became a fair rider, I remember, and a fair shot. But he never became the horseman his father was."

Lady Eden has recorded that even in very early days Anthony had a leaning towards politics, that he would debate freely and keep himself informed of current affairs even at his

preparatory school. On train journeys he would recall the political events connected with towns the train passed through, the chief elections, and the names of the candidates.

But politics was not at first the most obvious career. Anthony had inherited much of his father's talent—or something more than talent—for painting, and it is not impossible that, but for the First World War which deepened and matured his character, he might have found his means of self-expression most aptly in art. His work is said to have been promising enough to suggest he might have made his name as an artist. Although he soon gave first place to politics, his interest in art has remained. It was well known even in Oxford days, and has resulted in a private collection of modern pictures chosen with discrimination and an eye to future trends—an artist's collection rather than a collector's.

His education was in the hands of a governess until 1906, when at the age of nine he was sent to Sandroyd School, near Cobham, in Surrey. Sandroyd is an orthodox entrance to the privileges of Eton and Christ Church, and has played its part in introducing various foreign rulers to British private education.

Eden duly went up to Eton in 1911 to Ernest Lee Churchill's House, famous in the days of Mitchell, the great cricket coach, for its athletic distinctions. The Hop Garden, as it is called, lies at the very centre of Eton at the head of Common Lane and opposite the New Schools. With Eden Minor in the Middle Fourth in 1914 was Henry Segrave, later to become famous for his speed records and even as early as 1916 in the Department of Military Aeronautics. L. N. Kindersley, too, was a school friend, son of Sir Robert the economic authority, who, with so many others of that young society, met an untimely death in France. Out of those twenty-eight members of the Fourth no fewer than nine gave their lives to their country in the war, and almost all saw active service.

Eden's generation belonged to an Eton that was still the primary and unchallenged source of the nation's rulers. But radical and even revolutionary forces were undermining the social

order on which Eton's supremacy had been so firmly based. Such books as MacNaughton's *Fifty Years of Eton* and Lubbock's *Shades of Eton* recall the vanished world of Eden's school days, so soon to be swept away by total war and mass democracy.

At Eton, Anthony's career was exemplary and promising without being brilliant. He emerges conspicuously in no extraordinary distinction or unusual escapade. He seems not to have attracted much attention, and there are no legends around his name. It appears he took a special interest in Divinity; at least he won the Brinkman divinity prize, but this of itself should not be taken to point to a nature more serious and scholarly than the average. Nor probably was this distinction so highly regarded by his contemporaries as his athletic prowess. He was a good all-rounder at games. He gained his House colours for football; he was a keen cricketer and a promising oarsman. It is said that only the outbreak of war in 1914, which in common with so many of his contemporaries cut short his school days, prevented him from winning his rowing colours.

As soon as he was eighteen, Anthony duly joined up and was attached to the King's Royal Rifle Corps in September, 1915. He was gazetted temporary lieutenant and found himself on the Western Front in the spring of 1916—by which time operations had become stabilised to the point of strategic stagnation. Along the whole front battles large and small developed, deadly but essentially futile.

"He's a cheery old card," grunted Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.
But he did for them both by his plan of attack.

The impact of war on Eden was to bring his qualities of leadership and administration quickly to the fore. He became an adjutant at the age of nineteen, achieving thereby the record of being the youngest one in the Army. On 5th June, 1917,

Lieutenant R. A. Eden was gazetted as having been awarded the Military Cross.

From Ypres he was transferred for a time to the Somme, and as a result, it has since been pointed out, there were opposing each other the two men who were later to be in closer and more momentous contact and conflict: Anthony Eden and Adolf Hitler.

The experience of all the horror and death must have hardened his sensibilities and eaten into his mind. No doubt it underlies the intense sincerity of his various pleas for peace in our time. For him they were never the recitation of a formula with their spiritual origin in Staff Headquarters. Although he has very rarely given direct expression to it, his is the front-line point of view. Once in a great debate on Disarmament he was sufficiently stirred to break away from his natural war-time reticence and anonymity. "It is," he declared, "not only that those who have seen war dislike it, but those particularly who saw the last months or the last weeks of the last war had a vision of what the next war might be expected to be. I remember an evening," he went on, "in the very last weeks of the war, in the last stages of our advance, when we had stopped for the night at brigade headquarters in some farmhouse. The night was quiet and there was no shell-fire, as was usual at the end of the war, but quite suddenly it began literally to rain bombs for anything from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour. I do not know how many bombs fell in that time, but something between thirty and forty, I suppose. It seemed to us to be hundreds. I do not know what the explanation was, but perhaps it was that the enemy aeroplanes had failed to find their objective and were emptying out their bombs before crossing the line on their way back. Whatever the explanation, what rests in my mind is not only my own personal terror, which was quite inexpressible, because bombing is more demoralising in its effects than the worst shell-fire, but the comment made when it was over by somebody who said, 'There now, you have had your first taste of the next war!' "

It was chiefly his precocious organising talent that distinguished him and led to his promotion after his experience of fighting on the Somme to Lord Plumer's staff. He rose to the rank of captain at the age of twenty, and was actually posted brigade-major on his brigade's staff.

The war ended, and left him at the age of twenty-one successful as a soldier, with administrative ability plainly revealed, but with no plan for civilian life. His father had died, and his brother Timothy had succeeded to the baronetcy and the life of country leisure that this was considered to entail. It was left to Anthony to carve out a career for himself; the family that had given two sons to the country had survived it with a diminished fortune.

CHAPTER 3

B.A., M.P.

IT WAS Lady Eden, apparently, who suggested to Anthony that he should go up to Oxford and make up for the lost years of warfare. "I think," she is reported to have said, "that I can claim to have brought about Anthony's entry into politics after the war. I suggested that he should go to Oxford when he left the army. He hesitated first when I mentioned it. 'What, go back to school, Mother?' I remember him saying with an amazed expression. But he went."

The Oxford he entered in October, 1919, was new, strange and without precedent. The usual young undergraduates were there, of course, though in diminished numbers, but the rest of the students were young men back from the war, older not only in years but also older from their war experience. These "veterans" had to conform to the adolescent conventions of a secluded university after playing their parts on an international stage. From the life of the trenches they had now to turn to scholarship and to the minutiae of a curriculum. For the most part they found it difficult to settle down; but Anthony Eden was one of those who entered on their studies with all the energy and determination that the war had demanded of them. He did not try to make contacts with the young undergraduates, but set himself to study and to repeat at the university the success he had won on the battlefield. He did not write for any college paper. And although it has been said that he was already seriously contemplating politics as a career, he did not join the Union Debating Society, the usual path for aspiring politicians, and he made no political speeches. Nor does it seem that he took any serious interest in games. He joined the O.U.D.S. but there is no evidence of his taking any active part

in its proceedings or productions. In some ways he had chosen in Christ Church the best college for the pursuit of quiet individualism. For, unlike some of the smaller colleges, the "House" is always tolerant of the man who asks to be left alone.

His tutor was R. Paget Dewhurst, and his "school," significantly enough, Oriental languages. The choice of such an exotic subject was a further factor in his "splendid isolation" at the university. For the future, however, it opened horizons of special knowledge in the event of his pursuing the Foreign Service or politics or the arts. It is Dewhurst who is credited with a prophetic insight into the future career of his promising student. That Eden was already showing signs of intending politics as a career may perhaps be deduced from the story of Professor Dewhurst's prophecy that Anthony Eden would be Foreign Secretary by the age of forty. Certainly at the academic level Eden merited his tutor's high opinion, for when in due course Eden took his Final Schools (he was just twenty-five years old at the time) he gained first-class honours.

Shortly after leaving Oxford the challenge of a General Election enabled him to put his political ambitions to the test. It was a good moment to enter the lists. After four years the seemingly irresistible Coalition Government of Lloyd George had been sundered by a meeting of Conservatives at the Carlton Club. The occasion had been dominated by a comparatively obscure personality, Stanley Baldwin. As a result, the majority of the Conservatives decided to resume their independence under Bonar Law's leadership. There was, of course, no hesitation about party, and as a Conservative he felt, no doubt, that his native county ought rightly to return him to Parliament. So he seized the opportunity of the general election of November, 1922, to offer himself to the Spennymoor Division of Durham. He had Liberal and Labour opponents. The former had a policy, the latter the sympathies of the miners. Captain Eden had neither; and the accident of his birth in the district a dozen miles away and twenty-five years before does not seem to have

impressed the constituents. The *Durham Chronicle* remarks kindly that "his prospects of election are not considered promising."

The Liberal pointed out that Captain Eden had formerly declared himself a supporter of the Coalition—"the best brains in the country"—now he came forward as the supporter of Mr. Bonar Law. This perhaps reinforced Mr. Bonar Law's contention that the time was now ripe for Conservatives to contract out of their double loyalty.

Captain Eden's principal election speech asserted the indispensability of Conservative Government to the country, and emphasised the point that Conservatives were not hostile to trade unionists in spite of the criticisms which were unfortunately so widespread. He declared himself a loyal follower of Mr. Bonar Law; said that the primary needs of the country were a revival of trade, "stability of national forces," and the restoration of vigour and energy to great industries. Private enterprise had built up our industries; it alone could restore them. All these things could be done by Mr. Bonar Law's Government. He would give the country security, develop the national markets, decrease the vast army of the unemployed. As for himself he hoped to see more capitalists, not fewer. And as for trade unionists they should remember that they owed many of their privileges to the Unionist Party. As for the Liberals they were weak in policy, weaker in unity, and weakest of all in leadership. They were still whales, but whales on dry land.

Unconvinced by this assertion of the necessity of Conservative Government for England, ungrateful for the favours of the Unionist Party to trade unionism, even unswayed by the prestige of Captain Eden's principal supporter, the Marquess of Londonderry (the famous coal-owner), the miners of Spenny-moor rejected both Conservative and Liberal and returned the Labour candidate. Indeed, the Labour candidate with 13,766 votes was over 6,000 ahead of Captain Eden, and over 100 ahead of Captain Eden and the Liberal combined.

He had begun his political career in the usual way—by being defeated. He had no intention of abandoning this career he had now chosen, and merely waited for the opportunity to present himself to a more appreciative body of citizens than the subterranean toilers of Spennymoor.

Next year (1923) the opportunity came. In October the electors of Warwick and Leamington said goodbye to their Conservative member, Sir Ernest Pollock, who had just been appointed Master of the Rolls. To step into the shoes of this very able member was not easy for a young man who had had no contact with Leamington whatever, and who was only invited in the first place as an unknown substitute for a rejected local champion.

Sir Ernest suited his constituents very well, but he had failed them in one respect. He had never provided them with an exciting election. In 1918 when he first won the seat only a quarter of the electorate had bothered to vote; in 1922 no one came forward to oppose him. A fog of apathy settled over the constituency.

Suddenly it lifted. "Rumours indicate a rare exciting time," reported the *Leamington Chronicle*. Not only were there to be three candidates—Leamington had never seen a Labour candidate in its midst before—but two of them were actually related, by marriage only, it is true; but the situation was an odd one.

To the Conservative candidate, stranger though he was, Leamington extended a friendly welcome. Captain Eden found nothing in this large rural division to remind him of the intractable Durham miners. This time he was opposed by his sister's mother-in-law, the Countess of Warwick, who, at the age of nearly sixty-two, was setting herself the formidable task of breaking new ground for the Socialists. The Liberal candidate was George Nicholls, a self-made Peterborough man, who wisely directed his energies towards the agricultural vote.

Even more interesting to the public than the one link of relationship between the two candidates was the fact that a second link was about to be forged. Captain Eden had just become

engaged to be married to Miss Beatrice Beckett, the daughter of Sir Gervase Beckett, banker and part-owner of the *Yorkshire Post*, and son-in-law of the Countess of Warwick. The wedding was to be celebrated in the middle of the campaign, November 5th.

Although the constituency was already Conservative and well disposed to the new candidate, Eden was not walking into a perfectly safe seat. There was plenty of work to do. For one thing there were two hundred square miles to be covered; and moreover the electorate had been almost doubled since the last contest by the addition of about 19,000 women who were now to exercise their privilege of voting for the first time. Some saw in this the Countess's chance to rally her own sex in her support. Women candidates were rare in those days, and women had a way of demonstrating their solidarity irrespective of their political opinions. Others, more worldly wise, saw a much more likely bait for these susceptible voters in the person of the handsome young Conservative candidate. If the contest were to be one of *Solidarity versus Sex Appeal*, none could be better placed than Anthony Eden for the job of attracting the great majority of women voters who care nothing for political argument. That is not to say that he did not also stand a good chance of attracting the politically minded minority as well.

On November 5th, Captain Eden and Miss Beckett were duly married at St. Margaret's, Westminster. The Archbishop of York officiated, assisted by the Bishop of Wakefield; Major the Hon. Evelyn Eden, M.C., was best man. After the reception the couple left for their honeymoon, to be spent not in Warwick Castle as the romantically minded lady voters of the division had thought almost inevitable, but in Sussex.

The honeymoon lasted two days. No more time could be spared: polling-day was only a fortnight ahead. Then after six days more campaigning suddenly the tension relaxed. Parliament was dissolved; a general election became necessary as a result of Baldwin's determination to secure a Conservative mandate for Protection. Polling-day was fixed for December

6th, over three weeks away. The candidates were nominated once again, and the Edens went away for another honeymoon, this one lasting a week. No doubt by this time all three candidates had had enough of the campaign, the longest in electoral history. By the end of it Captain Eden estimated he had made nearly eighty speeches. The delay told in his favour; he had time to make himself known to the voters and energy enough to stand the prolonged strain. For Lady Warwick, on the other hand, the long campaign was crippling. Indeed there was hardly one feature of the contest for which she might be thankful. From the beginning she was reproved for having consented to stand as a Socialist. At best, it was considered tactless of her to stand in Warwick of all places. She was not even credited with sincerity; for it was the general opinion that she would withdraw before polling-day.

The result was duly announced six weeks after the candidates had begun their campaigns. Seventy-five per cent of the electorate voted. Captain Eden polled 16,337; George Nicholls, 11,134; Lady Warwick, 4,015; plurality, 5,203. His future and his political position apparently assured, he came to London, took a house in Mulberry Walk, Chelsea, and settled down to the social activities of a political career and to the pursuit of his artistic interests.

The election itself was indecisive. The Conservatives were defeated but neither Labour nor Liberals had won. Nonetheless, after various constitutional and political expedients had been considered and rejected the way was clear for the first Labour Government in British history to take office.

The Protection appeal had been premature but it had served to rally the Conservatives still not wholly united by the Carlton Club coup. In spite of the tactical reverse, Baldwin's strategic purpose for his Party's future had been substantially secured.

CHAPTER 4

MAIDEN SPEECHES

ON THE evening of 19th February, 1924, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Samuel Hoare moved the following resolution on Air Defence:

"That this House, whilst earnestly desiring the further limitation of armaments so far as is consistent with the safety and integrity of the Empire, affirms the principle laid down by the late Government and accepted by the Imperial Conference that Great Britain must maintain a Home Defence Air Force of sufficient strength to give adequate protection against air attack by the strongest air force within striking distance of her shores."

The debate arising out of this resolution belongs to a dim and distant age when disarmament was the declared policy of His Majesty's first Labour Government. In all the welter of goodwill only a few voices were raised in warning of the wrath to come. It was not a good moment for the Parliamentary beginner to intervene; but the immaculate and seemingly self-confident Member for Leamington was not dismayed. He had maintained a decent silence for the first six weeks of the new session. In choosing this occasion to rise from his place on the Opposition back bench and claim the unwritten privilege of priority over the speaker's impartial gaze it may have seemed to him that he had little to lose. As a young aristocrat with a good military record there was no *prima facie* case for trying to placate the honourable members of the proletariat. Discretion was the duty of the leaders of the Conservative opposition: for himself the obvious line was to say what Government and Opposition would naturally expect him to say in an atmosphere of confused working-class idealism. Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Samuel Hoare had symbolized the sagacity of the staff

officer, Major-General Seely the explosiveness of the "brass hat"; what the Conservative case required now was a brief sprinkling of subaltern insolence; otherwise Britain's air defence would ascend into the stratosphere and not be easily restored to earthly influence.

It must be admitted that Captain Eden's first intervention in Parliament was the reverse of conciliatory. His answer to a Labour inquiry from what quarter we might expect air attack was that he did not know; for the question was off the point. Surely we should prepare to defend ourselves from any quarter. He stressed the impossibility of providing air defence at a moment's notice, and the extreme vulnerability of London from the air. He hoped the Government would not be tempted by sentiment and that the minister would act not in accordance with his principles, but, instead, with the programme he had inherited from the other Parties.

Captain Eden hurried on to his conclusion. "The Under-Secretary asked what was meant by adequate protection, and he said he believed preparedness was not a good weapon. That may be, but unpreparedness is a very much worse weapon, and it is a double-edged one, likely to hurt us very seriously." The Under-Secretary had quoted an old military maxim saying that the resolution, divided as it was into two parts, reminded him of an ancient military slogan, "Trust in God, but keep your powder dry." When Eden commented that it was a cynical motto, Labour members cheered. "I will quote one," he continued, "which is, that 'Attack is the best form of defence.'" This, however, was more even than the customary indulgence and courtesy could stand, and members shouted, "No, no!" Captain Eden was not to be diverted. "I expected honourable members opposite would be a little surprised at that doctrine: I was not suggesting that we should drop our bombs on other countries but simply that we should have the means at our disposal to answer any attack by an attack. It is a natural temptation to honourable members opposite, some of whose views on defence were fairly well known during the years of

the war, to adopt the attitude of that very useful animal the terrier, and roll on their backs and wave their paws in the air with a pathetic expression. But that is not the line on which we can hope to insure this country against attack from the air. I believe and hope that the honourable members opposite will carry out the programme which they have inherited and will safeguard these shores, so far as they may, from the greatest peril of modern war." Whether Captain Eden had been responsible for any of the debate's "serious argument" *The Times* does not say; his maiden effort was not singled out for special mention. The truth is that in a somewhat inauspicious debate he had made a somewhat inconspicuous début.

The second reading of the Peace Bill arising out of the Treaty of Lausanne was to provide Anthony Eden with a far more significant opening, his first major excursion into foreign affairs.

From the Conservative point of view if the Treaty was good it was a pity that the precarious Labour Government relying on Foreign Policy for its success should get the credit for completing their work; on the other hand if the Treaty was bad were not the Conservatives the authors of the disaster? Labour on the other hand could only regard it at best as a step-child. On the whole there was a temptation that spread beyond control of Party Whips to bury rather than to praise it.

The Turkey of Kemal was a challenge to post-war British policy. It called for fresh appraisals of nationalism and of minorities; of ex-enemies and of dictatorship and democracy itself.

Eden in his speech showed himself alive to most issues; speaking as "one who may claim some small first-hand knowledge of the country with which we are dealing," he began by pointing out that the position since the Armistice had been that in all the treaties negotiated by Mr. Lloyd George we were the victors. "We could in a measure dictate our terms to the vanquished. Further—and very little reference has been made to

this point—we were able to work, to a great extent at any rate, in unity with our Allies. At Lausanne the tables were turned and the position was reversed. In the eyes of the Turks we were the vanquished, not from the military point of view but because, rightly or wrongly, they looked on this country as having sympathised with aspirations of their enemies. Consequently they claimed that the defeat of the Greeks was a moral defeat of this country also. Further, as we all know, there was very little unity among the Allies at Lausanne. We had to deal not with a vanquished enemy but with the representatives of a nation fresh from a great victory—proud, and justly proud of the achievements of their armies, and knowing full well that they could only obtain the approval of their countrymen by securing terms which would redound to the credit of their country. I suggest that under those conditions it is a matter of the greatest congratulation to our representatives that an agreement of any kind was arrived at, and it is a great tribute to the patience, the tact, the zeal, and the understanding of our representatives at Lausanne.”

He went on to tackle in what can best perhaps be termed the modern manner the extremely thorny question of the Christian minorities. “It is urged that there is not sufficient protection for Christian minorities within the Turkish dominions in this Bill. That is a very fair criticism.” But our representatives who fought for them were not supported and were consequently not successful; but as being important in arriving at a conclusion on this subject he called in the experience of history and asked whether we had not over and over again obtained treaties with Turkish guarantees for the protection of Christian minorities which originally had seemed to be adequate, but which when the time of testing came had failed to enlist any actual defence for those minorities. “It is,” he said, stressing a point of principle which was to have over the years, wider validity than its Turkish context “possible to exaggerate the value of these guarantees. We are far more likely to be able to assist those unfortunate minorities by acting as the friends of the

Turkish nation on the basis of this treaty than by producing clauses which would only have been granted, if granted at all, resentfully and in a spirit of bitterness." The Turkish people, in his opinion, had always been and were still resentful of any attempt by any other country to claim a prescriptive right over any portion of their citizens. He pleaded for friendly negotiation as against strict insistence on the letter of the Treaty, and he concluded with a few words on existing conditions in Turkey.

This speech was undoubtedly a milestone on Eden's journey to the Foreign Office. The Prime Minister associated himself profoundly with what was said by the honourable member opposite. It was not the letter of the law by which Turkey was going to be judged. "You can have the clauses beautifully drafted," said Mr. MacDonald; "clauses with guarantees, clauses with securities, clauses with commissions, clauses with consuls and representative officers, and after all they will not work." The old Turkey was dead, a new Turkey had been born—here was a nation for whose welfare and friendly view our great Commonwealth of nations could not afford to be indifferent.

CHAPTER 5

RED-LETTER DAYS

CAPTAIN EDEN was making progress and taking pains. He had already, ten days before the Lausanne debate, intervened effectively on the Air Estimates, asking pertinent questions about subsequent employment for the short-service commissioned officers and about the seconding of officers from the Army and Navy to the Air Force. "We all know the difficulties of that system, and that neither the Admiralty nor the War Office is very fond of it." But he went on to say the attitude of the departments were minor difficulties compared with the all-important necessity of securing a more vital co-ordination between the various arms of the Services. "That is, I think, the point in which our national defence is weak. We have all to realise that in the next war co-ordination will be even more vital than it was in the last war, and unless I am mistaken it is the Air Force itself that will prove the pivotal point in this co-ordination."

He had hoped to find the Under-Secretary for Air "a very Cerberus" in defence of the Estimates, had been somewhat disappointed, and called on him to "stiffen his back" against the other Services when he found himself in competition with them.

Keeping in mind the year—1924, the background—Socialism's rosy dawn, this plea for co-ordination has about it the vision of Jules Verne. But in those days he did not merely confine himself to the cultivation of a prophetic soul, to the casual brilliance so often associated with the young Tory and the silver spoon. He was prepared to undergo the rigours of what Mr. Churchill is alleged to have damned as "mere detail." Two days after the Lausanne Treaty debate, at approximately

1:00 A.M., we find him in the thick of the fray on the vexed question of the cost of diplomatic buildings.

The House adjourned on 7th August for the summer recess. It met again on 30th September; by 9th October the House had been prorogued, the Labour Government defeated, and the country in the throes of a General Election.

The question of Anglo-Soviet relations had been increasing the tension in Parliament and threatening the flimsy Liberal-Labour alliance. In foreign affairs the Government's policy had met with success. It had translated the problem of German reparations into something like feasible finance, while reinforcing the arrangement by obtaining America's collaboration. At the same time MacDonald achieved a considerable triumph in his negotiations with Herriot, and persuaded him to withdraw the French troops from the Ruhr. Anglo-French relations were in fact clarified and reinforced. MacDonald, who had taken on the double office of Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, gave real momentum to the authority of Geneva.

The attempt to achieve normal relations with Russia was not in itself a sufficient reason to bring the Government down. Admittedly the memory of General Wrangel and the first impact with an absolutist ideology dedicated to the overthrow of Capitalism caused our Conservative public opinion to put its class-consciousness before its economic self-interest, and admittedly a Labour Government was *ab initio* suspect. But it could, no doubt, have carried the day if it had shown more resolution in its method of handling the negotiations. And as Mr. Spender has pointed out: "In the last weeks it had shown a wavering mind which suggested to the House of Commons, always sensitive on this point, that it was liable to the control of influences outside Parliament and unknown to it." Thus in June the Prime Minister gave an explicit assurance that there would be no British guarantee of a loan to the Soviet. In August he stated that the negotiations had broken down over the compensation to owners of nationalised property. Then, immediately afterwards, he declared that a treaty was in draft which,

when certain conditions had been fulfilled, would in fact contain provisions for the loan.

Then came the complex vacillations and ambiguities of the Campbell case,* which Mr. Clynes has indignantly described in his autobiography as "the most trumpery excuse ever elevated to a level of national importance." Nonetheless Sir Patrick Hastings (the Attorney-General) and Mr. MacDonald involved themselves in an orgy of pompous tomfoolery and prevarication and played right into the hands of their experienced enemies. The Liberals' face-saving amendment calling for an impartial inquiry into the whole affair was indignantly rejected, and a purely Parliamentary battle which ought never to have been provoked, but to have been at all costs assuaged, was carried to the bitter end of defeat and dissolution. There followed one of the most vitriolic and unsatisfactory general elections in British political history, for in the middle of it the *Daily Mail* published the Zinoviev letter. This letter was addressed to the British Communist Party by the *Presidium* of the Communist International—a body which had affiliations with the Soviet Government. It was dated 15th September, and urged our Communists to "stir up the masses of the British proletariat to organise and foment mutiny in the army and navy and rebellion in Ireland and the Colonies." Preparations were to be made for an outbreak of active strife. Even the Labour Party itself was numbered among the damned. A close watch was to be kept over its leaders "because they may easily be found in the leading-strings of the *bourgeoisie*."

The date of its appearance in the *Daily Mail* was Saturday, 25th October—five days before polling-day—and it created a national sensation. The *Daily Mail* asserted that the Foreign Office had come into possession of the letter, and had sent a demand for an explanation to the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires. The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires (a personal friend of Zinoviev) at once disowned the letter and called it "a clumsy forgery." If

* The prosecution of a Communist editor which, it was alleged, the Attorney-General had been persuaded to call off for political reasons.

Mr. MacDonald had followed up this denial with one in similar terms the situation might have been saved. But he maintained a fatal silence. As Mr. Clynes has asserted, "Mr. MacDonald's timidity, and his obstinate refusal to denounce this obvious forgery for what it was lost us the election."

The contest at Leamington this time was a straight fight between Eden and the indefatigable George Nicholls. Lady Warwick did not enter the fray again. Eden, in his election address, did not hesitate to exploit "The Campbell Prosecution."

Eden, without any ado, ran right into it with the heading in bold type, "The Campbell Prosecution." "Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "by refusing to allow an inquiry into its conduct in connection with the withdrawal of the Campbell prosecution the Government has courted defeat and forced a rushed election upon the country. Its refusal to face an inquiry, however constituted, can be due but to one of two motives; either to fear of what an inquiry might reveal or to a desire to precipitate an election rather than face the verdict of Parliament upon the outcome of recent negotiations with the Bolshevik Government of Russia." His second heading was directed at Anglo-Soviet treaties, which were denounced as "makeshifts hurriedly improvised in response to pressure exercised by extremists in this country. They embody the principle that the British taxpayer shall guarantee the repayment of a loan to the Bolshevik Government—a Government actuated by motives of hostility to the British Empire and to all that it stands for." In view of the Zinoviev letter this sentence alone was probably sufficient to consolidate his majority.

It is not impossible that the general form of the address was based on a suggestion from headquarters, for it will be noticed that nearly every Conservative election address begins with its reference to the prosecution of the miserable Campbell and to the dangers of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty. It was symptomatic of the new Conservatism that was to rally round the new leader of the Party, Stanley Baldwin. Cutting out the flamboyant crusad-

ing zeal of Young England, Baldwin sought to resuscitate the Tory democrat. From the 1924 election onwards Baldwin's broad-bottomed Conservatism was to prevail as much over the true blue Tories, who had learnt nothing and forgotten almost everything, as over the official pink to crimson Socialism. In the search for the *via media* the Liberals were refusing to close their ranks and failing to digest two such overwhelming personalities as Asquith and Lloyd George. Baldwin instinctively looked to the *via media*. If he had lived in another age he might well have been rejected from the outset as a time-server. As it was, events and public sentiment conspired alike to force success upon him. The curious thing is, however, that although Baldwin's tolerant and progressive approach to Conservatism was calculated to draw and to demand the support of the younger elements in the Party, Baldwin himself did little to encourage youth.

The 1924 election was a triumph—the Campbell and Zinoviev bogies worked with shattering effect. Baldwin came back with the Conservative Party 415 strong, Labour down from 191 to 152, and the Liberal Party reduced from 155 to 42. The feud between Coalition and Non-Coalition Conservatives died away. Austen Chamberlain became Foreign Secretary, Birkenhead took the India Office, Balfour became Lord President of the Council, while Winston Churchill returned to his old Tory allegiance to become Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was a ministry of many talents, but youth was not served. To the infinite detriment of our public life Mr. Baldwin proceeded to fill his under-secretaryships with the aged, the infirm, and the second-rate. That he did so, however, must not necessarily be attributed to a forgetfulness on his part. His own career began late: and he may well have felt that an under-secretaryship for a man of fifty was in fact giving youth its chance; and secondly, he was a believer in Parliamentary apprenticeship.

Charles Masterman has described how over the years 1906 to 1918 the obscure back bench member for Bewdley would

remain in his place and listen hour after hour to dull speeches on unimportant subjects slowly absorbing the technique requisite for Parliamentary leadership. He learned also, no doubt, to assess the potentialities of members and to grow suspicious of the early brilliance that could not sustain the rigours of party discipline or committee detail. But in spite of what proved to be tragic circumspection in 1924, the member for Leamington had not missed his eye. Eden had consolidated his position*: increased his plurality by 1,000 and his aggregate by 3,000. He had apparently gathered in quite a number of Lady Warwick's Labour votes. Anyway the versatile and confident speeches of the last session were no flash in the pan. Reward and responsibility were indicated.

The first step in the ladder of Parliamentary promotion is the Parliamentary private secretaryship: success largely depends on personal relations and lobby influence. Eden's guardian angel at this stage was Godfrey Locker-Lampson, who was appointed Under-Secretary to the Home Office and so second in command to Joynson-Hicks. Locker-Lampson was an experienced politician and a lively personality. His interests and talents were similar to those of Eden. He was at once journalist and traveller. Eden soon settled down to his new duties; he was in closer contact with a department. There was greater scope for the administrative talents but there were, of course, not so many opportunities for debate. Although his speeches were rarer, the occasions were more carefully chosen, the opinions more deeply considered, and the arguments more closely knit.

It was sound instinct that led him on 25th March, 1925, to make his first intervention in the new Parliament in an important unemployment debate. The quotation from Baldwin he had used in his election address made it clear that the Party

* Shortly after the election, Eden's eldest son, Simon Gascoign, was born. The child was christened on 28th February, 1925, at Chelsea Old Church. Included in the godparents were the Earl of Feversham and the Countess of Ilchester.

would for the future be letting in Protection by the back door, but the only effect of that was to put more of the limelight than ever before on to financial and industrial questions as a whole. The atmosphere was tense. There was the threat of great strikes. Socialists, embittered by what had all the appearance of electoral sharp practice, were urging direct measures to short-circuit laborious constitutional procedure. "All the bitterness," says J. A. Spender, "left over from an exceptionally bitter election was now to run into industrial channels." But the compelling problem around which the bitterness was bound to surge was the ever-increasing volume of unemployment. From this time onwards, until the unrest culminated in the General Strike, the old condition of the people question was constantly raised under one heading or another.

Eden's speech was sound and detached. It avoided sentiment, but without undue prejudice laid down the principles of a constructive policy. He confessed to a certain sense of pessimism. "We seem to hear very much the same argument, very much the same lamentations and very much the same expression of hope, and yet we seem to have very much the same number of people out of work."

In his analysis of post-war economic conditions and in his respectful suggestions to the Government he played upon a familiar theme: "There are many social reforms we should all like to see carried through, but it is no use to put the cart before the horse." To reduce the burdens of direct taxation, and to assist our industries to keep old markets and find new ones, was "a case very much of now or never." This speech contained the seeds of policy that subsequently were to grow into Ottawa and Empire Free Trade. Thus: "We have lost our balance in this country. We are over-topped. We are too much industrialised and too little agricultural for the size of the country." To get that balance back we want to bring in the Dominions and Crown Colonies that make up our Empire. The Empire must be looked upon not as a series of units but as one unit. Once again, how a rural bias was to be reconciled with preferences

for a fundamentally agricultural Empire was not explained. Once again loose Baldwinian phraseology was invoked. However, it was a competent Party speech, and one calculated to convey that pure impression of industrial relations so neatly caught by Max Beerbohm in his caricatures of Mr. Baldwin's approach to the problem—where the Prime Minister is shown complacently surveying the representatives of Capital and Labour shaking hands underneath a rainbow!

CHAPTER 6

LOCARNO LIMITED

AT THE beginning of July, 1925, Eden interrupted his political activities to undertake a journalistic mission for the *Yorkshire Post*. Although his career was now likely to be first and foremost political, he had not given up his journalistic interests and pretensions, and he reinforced his connection by marriage with the *Post* by regular free-lance work. He had surveyed the Parliamentary scene for a year under the pseudonym of "Back Bencher," and also continued to contribute book reviews and art criticisms. In the summer of 1925, however, he applied to his father-in-law to be the *Yorkshire Post's* representative to the Imperial Press Conference which was to be held in Melbourne in the forthcoming September. He was duly appointed.

For Eden the project was in itself attractive. The desire for travel which he had gratified while at the University, that had led him into half the capitals of Europe and as far afield as Constantinople and Teheran, was strong within him and required fresh outlets. While politically he had not only a leaning towards first-hand information but also a real belief in the potentialities of a vigorous policy of Imperial development, it was only natural that he should put his ideas to the test by seeing the Empire for himself. He recorded his impressions in a series of articles for the *Post*, which were subsequently, with suitable additions and corrections, published in book form under the attractive title of *Places in the Sun*. This was to be Eden's one and only full-length literary effort.

In this work, as in all his public life, Eden is obviously struggling to suppress the outward signs of egotism and substitute for them the appearance of detachment that comes from

persistent fact-finding. It is a useful method politically, as it tends to give an aura of authority to an opinion which it might otherwise lack. The importance of *Places in the Sun* for us is that it is yet another of Eden's experiments in self-expression, and that, while valuable as hinting at a new Conservative approach to Imperialism, it brings to a decorous end Eden's somewhat casual and unco-ordinated journalistic ambitions.

Eden was back in the House of Commons by the beginning of December but did not take part in a debate until the day before the session ended. The occasion was a motion by the Prime Minister to approve the League of Nation's awards on the vexed question of the Iraq boundary. A debate in the full Parliamentary sense of that word it was not, because Labour members took the unusual course of walking out of the House to mark their disapproval of a resolution on high policy brought forward too late for proper consideration or the drafting of any amendment. *The Times* did not take a charitable view of their action, claimed that it was carefully planned and was the outcome of a purely party dilemma. Labour could not vote against the motion without impairing the League's authority, and could not vote for it without approving the Government's "Iraq policy." Actually the position was not quite so straightforward. Labour was being asked to approve the "Iraq resolution" under the shadow of a great rebuff.

The rejection of the Geneva Protocol brought up the whole question of commitments, and to Labour the Conservative Government's very support of the League was double-minded and half-hearted. For in Eden's absence there had been major developments. Detailed negotiations had produced the historic Locarno Treaty: a League within a League had been created. The objective was no longer to try and cover all possible wars and insure against the distant future, but to render difficult a particular war between France and Germany in the next few years. To the upholders of the Geneva Protocol, Locarno was a great betrayal. It was an impossible compromise between Collective Security and the Grand Alliance. On the one hand

Great Britain refused to confirm liabilities undertaken in the Covenant in Eastern Europe, while on the other hand the principle of reciprocity was violated. Great Britain was not to receive, under Locarno, assistance from Germany or France if attacked by either of those nations. The limitations of Locarno had been laid down by Mr. Baldwin as early as 8th October in a speech to the Conservative Party Conference at Brighton when he declared that it would have to be bilateral and purely defensive in character, and that any new obligation undertaken by Britain would have to be pacific and limited to the frontier between Germany and her western neighbors. In the same speech he had referred to Iraq and forecast the Government's acquiescence in the League Commissioner's report.

At the beginning of December the League Council, having decided to become arbitrator between Great Britain and Turkey, gave its unanimous award on the status of the Mosul and of the Straits. It declared that the provisional boundary called the Brussels Line should become definitively the northern frontier of the British Mandate of Iraq provided that Great Britain within six months assumed responsibility for Iraq for another twenty-five years, or less, if Iraq should be judged by the Council to have been qualified for membership in the League. Sir Austen Chamberlain took up a conciliatory attitude towards Turkey, and said he would be glad to enter into conversations with their Government in the hope that relations between the two countries might be made easier and safer.

While Sir Austen Chamberlain and the Colonial Secretary (Mr. Amery) were at Geneva, Mr. Baldwin faced a battery of questions from both sides of the House, which expressed concern about our Iraq Mandate. He promised to provide an opportunity for discussing it as soon as Mr. Amery returned, but it was the form he gave to this opportunity—namely, that of a motion expressing formal approval of the British action in accepting the League Council's award—which gave rise to Labour's anger and ultimate abstention. They were not placated by his promise, which he fulfilled, to submit the Treaty in its

completed form to the House in the coming session. Emaciated though the debate was through Labour's action, it is important not only as showing Baldwin's skill in the arts of conciliation, but as marking a rise in Eden's Parliamentary status, for he was the first Government spokesman after the Prime Minister.

Keeping in mind the implications of Locarno as against the Geneva Protocol, Baldwin's speech is a characteristic effort, deceptive in its simplicity, double-minded in its allegiance. He defended his motion chiefly for its loyalty to the League. He pointed out that the undertaking to accept the League award had been given in the first instance by Lord Curzon at Lausanne. It did not represent a particular policy adopted for this particular dispute, but was "merely one instance of the application of a principle to which all parties have been committed ever since the Covenant of the League of Nations was included in the Treaty of Versailles—I mean the principle of extending the use of the League of Nations as an instrument of the peaceful settlement of international difference, and strengthening by our support its authority for that purpose." Then follows a passage, forgotten now, but which contains within it all the seeds of subsequent ambiguities from Manchuria to Spain and Czechoslovakia: "Right honourable members who recently were sitting opposite"—(a perfect Parliamentary thrust this)—"were prepared to give that principle a much wider application than we believe to be practicable. They were ready to enter into a Protocol by which they would have engaged this country not only to submit all possible disputes of its own to arbitration but also to go to war with any other country which did not fulfil a similar obligation, however remote the conflict might be from any conceivable British interests. We have been less ambitious, but we have in the Treaty of Locarno applied the same principle to the settlement of all possible disputes affecting a particular frontier in which we are profoundly interested." Baldwin had thus already supplied the explanation of his famous but cryptic utterance that our frontier is the

Rhine, ten years before making it. It meant simply limited liability.

The rest of his speech was mainly concerned with rebutting charges made in the increasingly hostile Beaverbrook Press. The feud between Baldwin and the Press Barons was on, and in so far as Eden looked to the Prime Minister for advancement and salvation, he was not a candidate for honours with the *Daily Mail* or *Express*. Baldwin answered the assertion, made in these gospels of isolation, that we were pledged to evacuate Iraq by 1928, by pointing out that the existing Protocol provided for the conclusion at its expiry of a fresh agreement which might prolong the Mandate. It was too late to say that the Mandate was an error of judgment. Once accepted no mandatory was entitled simply to throw up the Mandate and leave chaos in place of it. Finally he repeated his wish for friendship with Turkey, and said he was going to give effect to it by meeting the Turkish Ambassador the next day. "One by one," reports *The Times*, "members rose and underlined the Prime Minister's points. Captain Eden, who is too rarely heard, added expert testimony to the difficulties of Iraq, which included an imported form of government, and he won manifest approval by his suggestion that a high diplomatic envoy should be sent to Ankara."

During his speech—the first to be reported fully in *The Times*—Eden urged that although it might seem to be a paradox yet the very extension of the maximum period of our Mandate was the best evidence of the likelihood of an early curtailment of our responsibilities in that country. Once again he stressed the pervading importance of prestige; "if we were to scuttle now like flying curs at the sight of our own shadow, our name would be a gibe in the mouth of every tavern-lounger from Marrakesh to Singapore. It might take centuries to recover our prestige." He recalled an Eastern proverb which claimed that bravery consists of ten parts, and that one part consists in running away and the other nine consist in never coming in sight of the enemy. Excellent though the advice was,

our name in the East must not be associated with it. It was all as Mr. Baldwin's cousin, Rudyard Kipling, would have wished. He was suitably sceptical of the wisdom of trying to set up democratic institutions in Eastern countries. With us Democracy was "a plant of natural growth." In the East it was "a forced growth, an importation, and foreign to the soil." We had asked a great deal of Iraq: "What I believe even a Western nation in their position could not have done." In fairness, the country must be given full time to adapt itself to our democratic peculiarities. In any case we had an overwhelming duty to protect the Christian minorities in Iraq. Where was the voice of Liberalism on this issue? How many Liberal majorities had been returned to Parliament on a wave of popular indignation! But if we should stand by Iraq we should also hold out the hand of friendship and conciliation to Turkey.

After reference to diplomatic representation in Ankara, which was loudly cheered, he went on to say that there were only two forces encouraging the Turks to foolish actions. "One of these is the agents of the Bolshevik Government of Russia, and the other—I have no doubt from different motives—is a section of our own Press. That is indeed, an unholy alliance; a marriage-bed upon which even the most hardened of us must blush to look. (Laughter). Are we to see Bolsheviks perusing the columns of the *Daily Express* and noble lords hustling to Fleet Street in Russian boots? Our Turkish friends should be assured that that section of the Press did not in any sense represent the voice of the country"—a comment which brought cheers and no doubt gratitude in the quarters for which it was intended. Encouraged, he did not mince his words. "The hand may be the hand of Esau, but the voice is quite undoubtedly the voice of Jacob; and if anything were to go wrong with Anglo-Turkish relations the responsibility must rest in a very large measure upon those organs of the Press which have been carrying out so unscrupulous a propaganda. There are some sacrifices which cannot in honour be made even upon the altar of circulation." Once again cheers; and with his conclusion—

a plea for goodwill all round—Captain Eden had scored quite an impressive debating success.

To intervene in Mr. Baldwin's conflict with Lord Beaverbrook was in terms of self-interest perhaps strategy rather than tactics: but his attack was robust and had the ring of conviction about it. It should perhaps be noted here that if Eden's rise to power is a dizzy and almost unprecedented advance yet it was achieved without any assistance from Fleet Street. He provided neither copy nor articles nor compliments. At no stage did he see fit to parade his personality. Instead he deliberately hid his light under Baldwin's bushel. In this debate he gave the lead to warm support for the Government's Mosul policy in general and for the Prime Minister in particular. He had played an important part in silencing rumours of a Conservative revolt.

Locker-Lampson's transference brought Eden right into the orbit of foreign affairs. So far he had confined himself to the Near East; henceforth he was to become a specialist in world policy. The sphere of his influence and interest widened at a critical moment in post-war diplomacy.

Locarno had brought Austen Chamberlain honour in the form of a K.G. and glory from the acclamation of Press and people. For a few weeks Great Britain, France and Germany went on a political honeymoon, and gave evidence of a new design for European living. "Let the dead bury their dead," Sir Austen had declared, and the world had applauded. It was a time when the symbols of good faith had intense meaning. Locarno would have to be developed and confirmed at Geneva. Everything turned on the form of that development and confirmation. After Locarno it had been generally understood that the next League Council meeting was for the sole purpose of admitting Germany to a permanent seat on the Council. But some weeks before the date of the Council meeting rumours spread that France intended to propose Poland—a step that was calculated to undermine the unique significance of Franco-

German reconciliation. On the 23rd February, in a speech at Birmingham, Sir Austen gave substance to the general alarm by allowing the impression to be conveyed that he had already arranged with M. Briand to support Poland's claim. There followed one of those spontaneous surges of public opinion in Press and Parliament and in public meetings which are an inherent, if incalculable, factor in our public life. Lord Grey added his authority and prestige to the general outcry, and in a speech at Newcastle asserted that neither the British, German, nor French Governments should tie their hands by any declarations before hand, and urged that if there was to be discussion of our admitting additional nations to the Permanent Council, that discussion should take place only after Germany had been admitted, so that Germany could take part in it.

On the 1st March, Sir Austen tried to allay anxiety by meeting the League of Nations' Parliamentary Committee, which consisted of members from all parties. He asked for patience and for latitude; a principle was not at stake, only a method of negotiation. We could persuade; it was not open to us to dictate.

As his critics had feared, Sir Austen's "free hand" involved him when he got to Geneva in the most unfortunate consequence. Sweden stepped in where England feared to tread, and took the credit of resisting alone the demands of France and Italy, while Sir Austen's complacency towards these two Powers helped to defeat Germany's admission to the Council. Sir Austen returned home to a storm of criticism. All the applause that had been showered upon him but a few months before now turned to abuse. He himself was moved to describe the conference as "a tragedy," and attempted to cover up the failure by an arrangement with France and Germany that Locarno should be kept alive even though Germany was still out of the League. Otherwise, Sir Austen had nothing to say in Parliament. This silence he would no doubt have maintained had not the Opposition forced a debate on supply on the 23rd March. Mr. Lloyd George led off with a powerful philippic, although

The Times, with unusual brusqueness, summarised it as "discursive and disconnected." He concentrated his charge against the Foreign Secretary by alleging that the negotiations had failed because they had been preceded by a secret arrangement to which Sir Austen was a party. In some ways Mr. Lloyd George overstated his case. In pre-war politics an element of forensic exaggeration was a virtue in debate; the influence of Baldwin and the growth of Labour, who were not too good at indignation in the grand manner, had put a new value on understatement.

But if Mr. Lloyd George was somewhat excessive in attack, Sir Austen made the same mistake in defence. "Mr. Chamberlain's reply," says that neutral commentary the *Annual Register*, "was remarkable chiefly for the bland way in which he ignored the precise matter of complaint against him. The Germans, he admitted, had been misled, but no one was in the least to blame for misleading them. He was not sorry for what he had done: rather he claimed credit for having kept Locarno so truly intact." He rounded his speech off in a pæan of self-praise and self-pity. All the same, the atmosphere as a whole was not particularly propitious for a Conservative back-bencher to rush in and defend the Foreign Secretary: but this is precisely what Anthony Eden did. According to the *Annual Register* the way Unionist members (ignoring both their own views previously expressed and the facts of the situation) rallied to the support of the Foreign Secretary, taking him at his own valuation and showering on him compliments for saving the Locarno Agreement and even saving the League of Nations, was the most remarkable feature of the debate which followed.

For Eden the task was particularly difficult. He had identified himself with a policy which if it had not yet crystallised into one of League liability was yet sufficiently modern that it demanded—as in the case of Turkey—a new deal for and with the defeated Powers. He had now to defend what was in fact a reverse both for Germany and the League. He had been pre-

ceded by Lord Hugh Cecil, whose Olympian detachment he could admire but not safely emulate. He assumed a direct realistic attitude. The plea was that Great Britain should put her foot down, but the only logical consequence of such action would be to secure not simply Germany's entrance into the League but also the black-balling of any other candidate under any circumstance whatever. That was a possible course to pursue, but at the same time it was both "arrogant and dictatorial." We could be grateful for the attitude Sweden had adopted; but it would bode ill for the League if it provided a precedent. "It is impossible for this country to go to Geneva with a declared and immovable edict. It is absolutely contrary to the whole purpose for which the Council of the League exists. What is the use of having a Council if everyone issues an edict before they get to it?"

He then made a skilful thrust at Mr. Lloyd George. "The last member of this House who had any right to advocate the policy of putting your foot down was Mr. Lloyd George. He was always putting his foot down. Did that result in the friendship of France, the confidence of Germany, or in the goodwill of Turkey? Today in the Near East it is a heritage of the right honourable gentleman's policy which is making it so difficult for us to obtain the goodwill of Turkey. He was always putting his foot down and always trying to take it up again. It is exactly what you cannot do. And as a result he was always putting his foot into it." He attacked Mr. MacDonald for his pessimism. "The League seemed to be doomed, and we were living in an atmosphere of inspissated gloom."

If Mr. MacDonald was asking too much of the League it is interesting to note what Eden hoped from it in 1926. "For my part I never expected in its earliest years the League would be called upon to give heaven-sent judgments, to formulate impeccable decisions. That is to ask too much. What I had hoped of the League, and do hope still, is that its greatest benefit will be by the opportunities it will create for statesmen of different nationalities to meet and exchange those opinions." He then

developed what almost amounts to a League philosophy which has been the keynote of all his subsequent action and popularity. "To expect," he declared, "the League to change human nature in a year or two was an extravagant expectation." He frankly admitted disappointment, which Sir Austen would have done well to admit as well. The descriptions of some of these intrigues that took place were "not very palatable reading." But there was a real lesson to be learned from all this apparent failure. "You will not change by one instrument or in one day the passions of nations. It must take time. Far more harm has been done to the League by people with their heads in the clouds and their brains in their slippers than by the most inveterate enemy the League ever had." Sir Austen had endeavoured, whatever the outcome of events at Geneva, to secure that the work he did at Locarno should not be lost. It was not lost.

This impressive excursion by Eden into the realms of Parliamentary dialectic and European diplomacy did not fail to make its impression, but for the next three or four critical months—which included the drama of the General Strike and the disillusion of its aftermath—he was content to keep away from the limelight and apply himself to the detailed duties of Parliamentary private secretary. Eden is attributed with a keen and a sharp temper which he is alleged to have inherited in the natural order of things from his tempestuous father. Such an assertion is easier to make than to deny, and quite apart from its truth or otherwise, constitutes news value. But whatever may be the outcome of his personal words, a study of Eden's career, particularly in its early stages when one might well expect it to be amply seasoned with indignation and indiscretion, shows clearly that in public affairs his first regard was to seek conciliation and to avoid controversy. For most public men the General Strike demanded harangues; for Eden it coincided with silence.

CHAPTER 7

AIDE TO SIR AUSTEN

ON THE 28th July, 1926, there appeared the following sober announcement tucked away at the bottom of the leader page of *The Times*: "The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has appointed Captain Anthony Eden, M.P., to be his Parliamentary Private Secretary in succession to Mr. L. R. Lumley, M.P.,* who has resigned on proceeding to Australia as a member of the British Parliamentary delegation." From this moment Eden's star was in the ascendant: up to this moment the Parliamentary tipsters, although impressed by his elegant appearance and the graceful style of his speeches, had not marked him for anything bigger than an ultimate under-secretaryship. He was regarded as an ornament of post-war Toryism—and to that extent fragile. There was distinction about him rather than brilliance. The truth was that the war had killed off the heroes of his generation. The competition was not keen, the ranks were thin, the standard was low. Indeed the move has about it all that casual inevitability which is an endless source of wonder to foreign observers. With Lumley's departure Sir Austen was too busy to look for a successor, so he went to Locker-Lampson and asked his advice. Locker-Lampson was finding Eden invaluable and had no doubt that he was the best man for the job. So he decided that he must subordinate his personal requirements to the interests of Sir Austen and the State and recommend Eden. Eden's position with Locker-Lampson was, as Locker-Lampson freely admits, the lowest rung on the ladder; but it had made possible a steep and

* Lumley, who has had a distinguished career, later became Governor of Bombay, and is now the eleventh Earl of Scarbrough, K.G. He is a close personal friend of Eden, and acted as godfather to Eden's second son, Nicholas.

quick ascent: altogether the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs had been a very good friend to the young and inexperienced Member for Leamington. It is always extremely difficult for a back bencher to catch the Speaker's eye, but the Speaker is susceptible to the well-timed word from a Minister. On more than one occasion Locker-Lampson's tactful suggestion made public what would otherwise have been a well-prepared but undelivered oration from Eden.

Locker-Lampson's chief impression of Eden at this time is of his intense ambition. "He was very ambitious, but in a good sense and as every young man ought to be." Then again he found him an extremely keen student of foreign affairs, anxious to supplement his precocious travel experiences in every way open to him. Finally he impressed Locker-Lampson from the beginning as an accomplished Parliamentary debater. It was his attention to style in the form and substance of his speeches as well as in his appearance and manner that first opened the doors of opportunity to Anthony Eden.

Thus at the age of twenty-nine he was safely inside the privileged ring of what the newspapers call "well-informed circles." He was in a pivotal position to study the mechanism of a foreign secretaryship under a Conservative Government and to analyse foreign affairs through the day-to-day contact with, if not a great Foreign Secretary, at least a supreme Parliamentarian. For a man of Eden's watchful disposition it opened up a boundless future: it was just the work to bring his experience to full maturity.

By a curious irony Eden's appointment coincided with Sir Austen Chamberlain's preoccupation over an obscure back bench member of the League of Nations, Abyssinia. Sir Austen had not fully recovered from the Geneva set-back, and was intermittently sniped at during the remainder of the session. Eden had always stressed peace with Kemalist Turkey, but the very process of liquidating the dispute involved troublesome consequences. Before settlement was reached Great Britain

had Italian backing in her claims against Turkey. A price for this support was demanded by the restless and apparently irresponsible Benito Mussolini, and was quietly paid by Sir Austen. An arrangement was made between Great Britain and Italy mutually to recognise spheres of influence in Abyssinia and in addition to grant to Italy the "exclusive right" to certain concessions. The immediate effect of this Anglo-Italian arrangement was to arouse French misgivings, which, as the third party to the 1906 Agreement, shared Great Britain's and Italy's special interest in Abyssinia. France demanded satisfaction from the British Foreign Office, and failing to obtain more than an ambiguous reply, encouraged Abyssinia to exploit her League privileges against the Imperialist designs of the British and Italian Governments.

Questions were asked in the House, and Sir Austen was able to make the British Government yet again the exponent of all that is disinterested and laboriously honest. Anglo-Italian agreement implied no conceivable threat to the integrity of Abyssinia. "Exclusive" rights were amply defined. No pressure would be brought on the Abyssinian Government; it would merely be asked "at the proper time to take into friendly consideration" the proposals made. We welcomed Abyssinia's action in bringing her accusations to the League as it would give the British Government a chance to show the full innocence of its policy. These formulae no doubt fitted in with Eden's view of legitimate and honourable procedure. The whole thing was at best a debating issue—a little capital for the Opposition, a little credit for the Government.

During the second half of 1926 international relations followed a comparatively smooth course. At the beginning of September, Sir Austen was in Geneva at the meeting of the League which admitted Germany, together with Poland, to seats on the Council, while on the Continent he had conversations with French and Italian Ministers, and gave encouragement to the direct-contact diplomacy with which Eden was to be so closely identified. On 30th September he met Mussolini on board a

yacht outside Genoa. The meeting, he told the Press, was in the first place, of friends, and in the second place, of Foreign Ministers—a degree of intimacy which Eden, to his cost, was never able to obtain. They had found “without surprise but with satisfaction” a community of outlook both on the particular issues between England and Italy and on the large issues of European politics. On the way home he had a talk with Briand to go over his talk with Mussolini, and Briand explained what he had said to Stresemann at Thoiry. The Thoiry conversations were also part of the general process of informal appeasement, and although Briand gave no explicit pledge about the evacuation of troops from the Rhineland, the possibility of evacuation became practical politics from that meeting onwards.

1927 opened in an atmosphere of political exhaustion and quietude. The fires of controversy in home affairs were spent; there was a comparative respite in Europe; debate accordingly gathered round events in the Far East. A Nationalist movement was making steady progress and creating sporadic disturbance, which found expression in acute anti-British feeling. On 4th January, a Chinese mob stormed the British and other foreign concessions at Hankow, and British residents there and in the Yangtse valley were gathered into Shanghai for safety. The Government first of all regarded the riot as nothing more than an incident, but afterwards was forced to the conclusion that it was symptomatic of sentiment throughout China and that military precautions should be taken to ensure more adequate protection of British nationals. Forces were dispatched amid an outburst of popular applause.

In December, 1926, the Government had defined its conciliatory attitude to Chinese nationalism in a memorandum. Three days after the troops had left it presented the Southern and Northern armies with a further statement declaring the measures Great Britain intended to take without revision of treaties in order to meet the aspirations of the new China. British concessions at various points were to be transferred to the Chinese.

On 29th January, Sir Austen Chamberlain, in a speech at Birmingham, gave assurances that the reinforcements were only to save British life and property, and that Great Britain was only waiting to give expression to its friendly sentiments towards China in negotiations with a government which could not speak for the whole of the country. The Labour Party was highly suspicious of the Government's policy, and felt that the combination of the mailed fist and the olive branch was calculated to provoke rather than allay the danger of a general war.

But Labour was outflanked, for the Conservatives used the Chinese disturbances to press their case against Soviet Russia. Russia had played her part in fomenting anti-British agitation in the Far East, and the occasion was now exploited by a section of the Conservative Party to repeat their claim that Anglo-Soviet relations should be broken off. Notes were published by the two Governments which did not substantially help the situation. It was generally felt that matters could not rest as they were. Labour wanted to improve Anglo-Soviet trade: Tory die-hards to bring it to an end. In a debate opened by Sir Archibald Sinclair on 3rd March, Sir Austen tried unsuccessfully to reconcile these incompatible demands and reserved for the Government the right to take further action, but before doing so "would call the world to witness" how serious the complaints were and give the Soviet one more chance to conform its conduct to the ordinary rules of international life and comity. Accordingly on 8th March we find Sir Austen in Geneva making capital for the Government out of the crisis in Anglo-Soviet relations, and his Parliamentary Secretary in the House scoring points on the theme of Troops for China and Security for Britain.

Sir Austen wished to dispel the belief that Great Britain was attempting to engineer a coalition against the Soviet Government. British policy had remained unchanged since Locarno and was summed up in one word, Peace. We never sought to promote our own interests by fomenting trouble between other countries. Eden for his part refused to accept any definition of

class distinction which would deprive any citizen of the British Empire of the full rights of his citizenship. "Citizenship has nothing to do with either class, creed, or sect." He inveighed against the Opposition's active interference in the crisis. He was afraid that, whatever the motive for it might be, "it proved once more that the only way by which an Opposition can assist the Government of the day in carrying out its foreign policy in a time of difficulty is to give it its loyal support within and without this House." This view has, on the whole, been exploited by Eden's enemies with greater effect than by Eden himself, and it is a theme to which he has not often made such explicit reference. His contention was that "while these warring generals have been at each other's throats, or rather prodding each other with a rather leisurely bayonet, we have maintained neutrality, and we are in no sense responsible for the anomaly which has been bred by these contending armies. In these circumstances we should look to the lives of our nationals and take the advice of our representatives on the spot about the necessary measures."

He ended with a more than usually bitter onslaught on Socialism for its militant pacifism. "I suppose we shall see inscribed on their banners in letters of gold such cries as 'Socialism is defeatism'; 'Endorse Socialism and leave English women to their fate!'" Such lapses into party jargon are rare, and do not, it would seem, represent Eden's instinctive approach to controversy. Nevertheless, this somewhat excessive and artificial anger had the effect of putting Labour on the defensive, making it appear at once indifferent and partisan, and although Mr. Clynes made an effort to smooth out the debate by asserting that no Opposition speaker had ever criticised the Government for their negotiations but only for their military action, his party called for a division, and were roundly defeated by 303 votes to 124.

On 23rd March, Eden moved his first resolution, on the subject of Empire Settlement, and cashed-in on the experience he had gained from his visit to "Places in the Sun." His motion

was skilfully worded and calculated to eliminate party strife. The speech he made to this theme was one of his best efforts. It was well informed but not overloaded with detail, critical but not cantankerous. It must have advanced considerably his popularity and prestige in the House.

The Times asserted that in calling attention to the reciprocal value of Empire, Captain Eden had grasped two great truths: the first, that producers wherever they may be must have a market for their produce; and the second, that settlers must know the conditions of life at their destination before immigrating. In the latter part he made a characteristic and significant plea for Labour backing in identifying immigration with enhanced living standards.

Eden followed up his highly successful Empire Settlement speech with a long holiday from Parliamentary duties. During his absence between March and November British foreign policy took a more decisive turn away from Geneva and in the direction of the Conservative Central Office. In the spring the rupture with Russia was successfully effected through the raid on the premises of the Soviet trade delegation at Arcos House. The brusque methods employed and the scanty evidence collected seemed to suggest that the British Government were trying to deal with the Soviet in the approved style of the O.G.P.U. In the spring, President Doumergue, accompanied by M. Briand, paid a state visit. Time was found amid all the exacting ceremonial for diplomatic parley. The *communiqué* issued afterwards was significant more for the choice than the substance of its words. In describing Anglo-French relations the *Entente Cordiale* was brought out of the drawer.

While Great Britain was narrowing the range of her collaboration, she was finding difficulties in the way of an Anglo-American naval treaty in particular and of disarmament in general. The year 1927 is not an especially dramatic one in the era of lost opportunities, but it is one of the highest importance. In this year dominant conservatism begins to make a virtue of

necessity; and the Labour spokesman who condemned Mr. Baldwin as the "living embodiment of Mr. Facing-Both-Ways" was not premature. Lord Robert Cecil, however, was to emerge a national personality by a resignation in the grand manner.

The specific issue on which Lord Cecil's grievance was based was the deplorable breakdown of the Anglo-American naval conversations which had been staggering on throughout the summer in a welter of weariness and detail. Neither Government had in mind to make any concession sufficient to make any agreement worth while. The farce ended with the heads of the two delegations, Mr. Bridgeman for Great Britain and Mr. Gibson for the United States, concurring in the firm opinion that the failure of the conference would not undermine the friendship of the two countries and would not inevitably lead to an arms race between them. Lord Cecil had been Mr. Bridgeman's colleague at the conference and had co-operated loyally throughout the proceedings. When they were over, however, he let the nation know without qualification just how strongly he disapproved of the Government's policy. At the beginning of August he sent in a letter of resignation from the Cabinet. Mr. Baldwin was away at the time touring Canada with the Prince of Wales on the occasion of that Dominion's sixtieth anniversary, so there was no immediate reply to Lord Cecil. As soon as Mr. Baldwin got back Lord Cecil sent in his resignation again, and insisted on its acceptance. With the letter he enclosed a minute which is one of the most outspoken indictments of the British Government's foreign policy ever composed from within the ring of responsibility. There was some hesitation before the Cabinet allowed it to be published, and then Mr. Baldwin rushed in with a reply the same evening. The repercussions from Lord Cecil's actions were felt for a long time, particularly in Geneva, but they were not sufficient to shake the Conservatives out of power.

In the meanwhile Sir Austen's critics were not inactive and roused themselves for a vigorous campaign throughout the

country. The autumn of 1927 was a decisive time in the chequered history of the League of Nations Union. This body set itself the large task of "educating public opinion." Although it used all the methods of a highly organised political party, it determined to cut across all party values to gather in the support of all men and women of goodwill who asked only Peace, Security, and Disarmament through the League of Nations. Chamberlain had not done enough to forestall this compelling moral plea. In 1927 the sense of insecurity was not sufficiently strong to make realism a sufficient antidote to it, but it was his misfortune that this surge of righteousness should have coincided with Lord Cecil's resignation.

Moreover, Lloyd George, as might be expected, entered the fray as an ancestral voice prophesying war. Sir Austen replied that he could not regard Mr. Lloyd George as a true friend of peace, while Mr. Lloyd George retaliated with the view that if Europe could not advance beyond Locarno war was inevitable. The Prime Minister tried to smooth out these ripples with oil and irrelevance. The great value of the League in *his* opinion was that it promoted discussion among the representatives of European States.

There was a brief respite, but on 16th November the storm blew up again when Lord Parmoor initiated a debate in the House of Lords on disarmament, made remarkable by Lord Cecil's personal account of his resignation. The speech throws revealing light on the origins of the inherent dualism in Conservative foreign policy between the wars—the conflict between the League and Locarno diplomacy, collective security and limited commitments, and at the personal level between Cecil and Churchill and the rest of the leadership.

Eden was to be heir to this struggle, but the long drawn-out persistency with which it has been waged is often overlooked. A week later the Labour Party followed with a lengthy vote of censure on the Government, based largely on Lord Cecil's revelations. From beginning to end his spirit brooded over the debate.

Mr. MacDonald spoke of him giving "one of the most illuminating speeches on the mind and action of this Government that I have ever read." His action was "absolutely unanswerable." Sir Austen Chamberlain, in his reply, tried to share out the blame for Lord Cecil's departure. The debate was leisurely and orthodox, which means that the Eden of 1927 speaks as the complacent back bencher who regards Lord Cecil with something like the disfavour that Mr. Neville Chamberlain regards the Eden of 1938.

Eden has travelled a long journey since that dim November speech. Lord Cecil's action did not appeal to him. The Opposition had typified the British delegation to Geneva as military in character, "but I do not think that any of us would associate the First Lord of the Admiralty with the clashing of sabres or Lord Cecil with the jangling of spurs. It would have been difficult in connexion with any work to find two countenances more essentially pacific. I believe the First Lord of the Admiralty went to Geneva with all the benignity of a Father Christmas, and I believe the Noble Lord, Viscount Cecil, went there with the ecstasy of a martyr on his way to the stake. The stake in his case was quite unnecessary and entirely self-imposed, but it does not effect in any way the genuineness of his martyrdom." If this observation is surprising to those whose memory of Eden does not go back before 1931, there are one or two more which throw significant light upon his early attitude to the general problem of British foreign policy and the League. *The Times* reported him in three lines as agreeing that the progress achieved by the Disarmament Commission had been slow but that they could not bang and hustle the world into Peace. But there was considerably more to it than that.

The debate coincided with two considerable crises, one between Italy and Yugoslavia over Albania, and the other a boundary and minority tension between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Mr. Noel Buxton, who preceded Eden in the debate, drew attention to both these questions, and complained that

Italy was sending notes to the Great Powers but not to the League. In both cases there was an opportunity to bring the disputes before the Council; in both cases they were being treated on old-fashioned diplomatic lines. The use of Article XI should be considered to effect equitable frontier control. The peaceful settlement of the Greco-Bulgarian frontier dispute of 1925—fresh in the memory, and ever since a famous League of Nations example—was cited. Eden, however, refused to admit these parallels or precedents in the Balkans and put forward the positive if personal view that on the whole “if settlements can be achieved by direct negotiations between the parties without appeal to the Council or to the League, those settlements are much better than settlements arrived at through the intervention of the League.

“For my part, I consider that in the Locarno Agreement we have gone as far as we are entitled to go. The Empire, which we must never overlook on this question, would not be prepared to pledge its future more extensively.” Then to a policy point which was to have a prophetic relevance to Eden’s approach to world problems in 1954. If there is to be further progress towards international action it “will have to be by regional pacts, local Locarnos, made by the nations of the districts whose interests are most closely connected.” The way to further European peace was by “a number of small Locarnos.” It was pointless to say that we must have disarmament without telling us how we were to have security. An agreement to disarm was not enough. The task was to remove suspicions so that confidence may grow and arms diminish. The policy of 1925 in the long run would prove better and wiser than the policy of 1924.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about this speech in the light of his career as it developed shortly afterwards, is its phraseology. There are no signs in it of a sense that to increase the range of League commitments and League action might conceivably be a British interest. Eden falls back on pre-war

language to cover what by implication he recognises to be post-war conditions.

1927 ended with the unanimous rejection of Soviet Russia's proposal for complete and universal disarmament. Mr. Baldwin would not give leave for it to be discussed in the House, while Lord Cecil described it as impracticable. On 5th December, Litvinov had an hour's conference with Sir Austen. There was a frank exchange of view, but nothing could be done to break the Anglo-Russian deadlock. Litvinov could give no pledge to confine the activities of the Third International.

1928 opened in a similar atmosphere of niggardly and lethargic policy. There seemed to be only persistent caution before unknown dangers. Foreign affairs were obliterated by floods in Chelsea and scandals in Hyde Park. Eden's interventions in debate at this time were perfunctory. He spoke once in February, using the occasion of the debate on the Address for a ramble that took him from the manufacturers of electrical machinery, *via* income-tax, to the dispatch of troops for the Far East. At the end of the month he returned for about ten minutes to his favourite topic of Empire settlement and reproduced most of the arguments for which he was beginning to establish a reputation. Once again he pleaded against haphazard immigration: rational and co-ordinated training was an essential preliminary. But even then there were limitations to the efficacy of State action. "Economic influences outside our control dominate migration. We cannot turn it on as a tap, though we can turn it off, but what we can do is to ensure that the stream when it is running flows into the correct channel."

In 1928 Eden saw American trade as a danger rather than as an opportunity. "Unless I am very much mistaken the capacity of the United States to absorb the products produced within their borders has just about reached saturation point." It was not open to us to fortify solely by our action the Dominion market against this potential onslaught, but the Colo-

nies were ours to protect. Accordingly "a cardinal factor in the Conservative creed" must be to do all that lies in our power to develop our Colonial resources. So a Dominion tariff was nothing other than "a national aspiration which we there see at work." Eden ended by trusting that the House as a whole would see its way unanimously to approve the motion. It did, after a number of members on the Treasury and Opposition benches had suitably congratulated the proposer and seconder.

The cumulative effect of speeches of this nature was undoubtedly helping to give Eden a certain prestige in high places. The occasions he picked out for his prepared orations, the sentiments he reiterated, were calculated to appeal to elderly Imperialists. Later on it was this particular brand of Conservative mentality that he was mortally to offend. For the present he was climbing upon the broad backs of the Diehards.

CHAPTER 8

DEBTS AND SETTLEMENTS

THE LATE twenties were primarily years of drift in British foreign affairs. If in 1928 the process was not arrested at least it was concealed beneath a number of lavish formulæ.

In January, 1928, the Government was firm over Egypt, and Sir Austen tried to rally support for his little experiment in militant diplomacy. But early in April he was called upon to make a far more comprehensive gesture, for the British Government received from the American Secretary of State (Mr. Kellogg) official notification of his famous proposals to outlaw war. They had already been laid before France. Sir Austen's first reaction was one of ill-disguised embarrassment. A peace proposal emanating from any source deserved sympathetic consideration, and it was doubly welcome if it came from the United States; on the other hand he must stress that Franco-British friendship was an essential element in world peace, and as he told a German statesman at Locarno, he did not propose to sacrifice an old friendship in order to gain a new one. This reservation shows how from the beginning the British Government and the Foreign Secretary misread the motives of those who were sponsoring the Kellogg Pact. It was either acceptable or unacceptable: it did not mean a re-orientation of alliance, or even a shifting of national sympathy. It was an attempt to pay tribute to the conception of peace as a world objective and war as a world responsibility. The British Government, however, could not see its way to accept the terms of the Pact without time or qualification. The Dominions must be consulted, in case it ran counter to any engagements we had undertaken with them. Finally we declared our willingness to co-operate

on the understanding that there was no essential difference in the French and American attitudes to the Pact, and that our freedom of action in respect of certain areas of the British Empire, commonly called "outlying districts," should in no way be called to account.

"The welfare and integrity" of these areas constituted "a special and vital interest." In the light of British and French suggestions, Mr. Kellogg put forward fresh proposals at the end of June. Once again the Government was circumspect, but by 18th July it plucked up enough courage to hand in a reply. The Americans had ignored the British request about the outlying districts; it was accordingly underlined. At the end of July the British reply was debated on the Foreign Office vote. Sir Austen hit out. If he was enunciating a British Monroe doctrine it was exactly comparable to America's original version, and was a measure of self-defence necessitated by the geographical position of the Empire. The Treaty might mean everything or nothing. These consequences depended almost entirely on America. Great Britain had signed in the hope and expectation that the American nation would range itself behind the Treaty.

In the course of his speech Sir Austen casually observed that France and England had settled their differences over naval tonnage. This was interesting in itself, and general curiosity was aroused, but immediately afterwards Sir Austen was taken seriously ill with an attack of bronchial pneumonia and ordered to rest for at least two months. Lord Cushendun took his place. Nothing more was heard about the Anglo-French settlement until the middle of August, when the French blurted out a sensational story that the two countries had formed a new *entente* and were arranging to pool their navies in an emergency. Britain for her part would withdraw any opposition she had put up to the proposal that France's trained reserves should be omitted from her land forces for disarmament purposes. Indignation was immediate and widespread. It was in this atmosphere of suspicion that the British delegation set out on its

annual pilgrimage to Geneva at the end of August. Lord Cushendun was at its head, and Locker-Lampson acted as substitute for Hilton Young on health questions. As Eden, in view of Sir Austen's illness, found himself without any special duties he asked his former chief whether he could join up with him. To this the Under-Secretary readily agreed, and Eden had his first official experience of League procedure. Among the other rising hopes of Conservatism also at Geneva was Alfred Duff-Cooper, who, as one of the junior members of the British delegation and Financial Secretary of the War Office, was at this stage rather higher up the ladder of status than Eden. Locker-Lampson was concerned with the finance of the League's health services, a branch of its work, which, because it is not politically controversial, is usually dismissed as being either technical or subsidiary. Eden must have had ample opportunity to study the League in action and to collect overwhelming evidence of the range of its functions and interests.

Cushendun used his speech to the Assembly as a reply to false rumours in the French Press. The Agreement with France was simply to help on the work of the Preparatory Commission for a disarmament conference. There had been differences between Great Britain and France, and it was deemed advisable that these should be cleared away first. Ministers and experts had thus been engaged in conversations for some months, and the result was a single text, but it had nothing to do with policy which had never been raised. The text had been submitted to the American, Japanese, and Italian Governments for their views, which explained the delay in publication. The French Press, however, maintained its previous attitude to the facts. Almost at once the German delegate, Herr Muller (who was also Chancellor of the Reich) put the issue to the test by raising the question of the Rhineland evacuation. He asked M. Briand whether negotiations could not be opened. Briand's reply was that Germany would have to make an offer. Lord Cushendun was approached and associated himself fully with Briand. In doing so he gave the lie to the sincerity of our laborious efforts

over years to mediate between Paris and Berlin. In other proceedings of the Council, too, on Hungarian and Balkan affairs, the impression was deepened that France and Great Britain were working according to secret plan. Cushendun once again protested our innocence in a speech to the Assembly, and the American and French Press again countered with revelations which showed the whole design as an Anglo-French threat to American naval ratios. America replied at the end of September to the Anglo-French plan, rejecting it politely but firmly.

The Opposition fires were fanned by the symptoms of a new orientation in our policy. The Labour Party saw in it a repetition of the history of 1906-1914. MacDonald called it diplomacy that was neither secret nor open but "tail out of the bag" diplomacy. Finally on 2nd October the Government published a White Paper which gave the details of the Anglo-French negotiations. Lord Cushendun was not cut out for the finesse of League arbitration, and apart from his handling of the vexed question of German Reparations at the Assembly, was both tactless and ineffectual. Eden's first official view of Geneva must have been a chastening experience.

During the winter months Government and Opposition in both Houses kept up an intermittent attack. Cushendun did his best to bury the Naval Pact with military honours, but both the Labour and Liberal Parties were resolved to have an exhumation. The House had not resumed after its vacation for more than a week before Mr. Lloyd George had moved an Amendment to the Address. Lloyd George brought up his heavy guns. All MacDonald could do was to repeat Lloyd George's questions: Were we committed to France?—Was it only a try on or was it something more?—What did our signature to the Kellogg Pact incur?—How were we going to carry it out? Bad psychology was at the root of our dilemma. Do not let us babble so much about security. The sinister feature of the Government's diplomacy was that fundamentally it was a war

diplomacy. We must take the risks of being at peace rather than accept the risks of being half-cock at war.

To follow three such orators, each at the top of his debating form, is a privilege that many members would prefer to waive. Very wisely Eden avoided the rhetorical flourish and confined himself to straightforward argument. Mr. MacDonald had "worked himself up to some measure of indignation" at the Government's present policy, and refreshed that indignation with reminiscences of his own recent brief tour to some of the capitals of Europe. Let us be quite clear what happened. The British Government was not responsible, according to Eden, for the original proposal, nor was it an action arising out of the brain of our Foreign Secretary with a sinister purpose behind it. The author of it was the chairman of the Draft Commission, who more than once appealed that those Powers which disagreed about the proposed Draft Convention should attempt to find a formula outside the confines of the Commission itself.

MacDonald tried to corner this excessively well-informed young Tory by asking him whether any attempt was made at Geneva to come to an agreement with America in the same way. But Eden was not to be led astray. Having established his point of fact there came the question: Were we right in trying to find a measure of agreement with the French Government? Undoubtedly we were. "We therefore reach this point that it was right to try and reach agreement but that the terms we achieved were unsatisfactory." It was not a question of comparing what we wanted with what we got, but whether the limitation embodied in the Agreement was an improvement on the condition of affairs which existed before. That was the only true comparison, and in it America was offered "a measure of departure" from the terms she had originally rejected. Thus the Agreement was something which might reasonably form the basis of future discussion.

Having established his complete command of the details involved, Eden went on to consider the more general aspects of our policy. As for our relations with France he hoped the criti-

cisms echoed by Lloyd George would not gain force or authority in this country. The solidarity of Anglo-French relations must form an inevitable basis for the peace of Europe, not only today but in the future. Recent events proved that the friendship was not exclusive. On the contrary, he went on in a remarkable passage, "It is the medium through which alone such progress as has been made in international relations has been achieved. Through that medium the agreements of Locarno were achieved and *rapprochement* with Germany made possible. It was through that friendship that Germany was able to find a place in the Council of the League of Nations itself, but for the friendly relations which existed between this country and France the League of Nations would not now be in the strong position it is at the moment."

In one important particular Eden allowed himself the liberty of criticising the Government by implication. "I am convinced," he declared, "that a greater measure of understanding between this country and the United States is the most important objective that the Government of this country could set before us." He hoped that successive governments, whatever their political creed, would assiduously pursue good relations with America, because it is "The most formidable safeguard for world peace in the years that are to come." Baldwin, with the debt settlement as a symbol of his original sin, was never very successful with the States. Eden, on the other hand, was always underlining the necessity of filling in the details of Anglo-American understanding, and steadily building up the reputation that was to make him, in terms of American opinion, perhaps the most popular of all our Foreign Secretaries.

Eden had made the most of a limited opportunity. With the exception of his shrewd blows at Lloyd George his tone was conciliatory, and as for Lloyd George there were no doubt advantages in seeking a vendetta with him. Certainly it was an easier task to attack than to defend Chamberlain. For Eden's chief heralded his return to health and duty with a very unfortunate speech in which to general consternation he had seen fit

to link up reparations with the evacuation from the Rhine. Only a few days previously Churchill had stated that they were distinct questions. L.G. thundered against the Government, pouring out a wealth of resonant rhetoric against our subservience to France. At Manchester he cried that "the nations of the world are heading straight for war, not because anyone wants it, but because no one has the courage to stop the runaway horses in the chariots of war."

This violence moved Eden to send his first letter to *The Times*. "Mr. Lloyd George," he wrote, "enjoys extravagance. He subsists upon superlatives. At the moment he is actuated by an animus against the French. Where the British Government would proceed by negotiation Mr. Lloyd George would proceed by invective. It was ever his method. It witnessed the nadir of British influence upon the continent of Europe during the closing months of the Coalition. We cannot revert to such methods without once again enduring the humiliation of their consequences"—and so to L.G.'s equine epithets. Eden took up the metaphor with relish. "Upon the foremost of these phantom chariots of his own imaginings rides an ex-Prime Minister of Great Britain. He leans forward—to lash the leaders with the thongs of mischief, and to cast squibs of suspicion under their hoofs."

During the remaining six months of the Government's life there was little for Eden to do but watch events. So 1929 opened in an atmosphere of political gloom and economic foreboding, and the activities of members of Parliament were for the most part confined to manœuvring for a favourable position at the forthcoming general election. Mr. Baldwin's "Safety First" seemed uninspiring to large numbers who looked for a bold lead in difficult times.

The Conservatives were relying largely on Churchill's last Budget, but on the whole it was quiet, and to that extent disappointing. It looked as though no life would be given to that great occasion. Speakers were merely using the House to ad-

dress their constituents, and debate was, by tacit arrangements between the parties, becoming perfunctory. The John Blunt of British Socialism, Philip Snowden intervened. "I was making," he writes in his autobiography, "an ordinary speech in criticism of Mr. Churchill's four years' record as Chancellor of the Exchequer when I made a reference to the Debt Agreements he had recently concluded with France and Italy." He describes how he denounced these agreements as being an unfair imposition on the British taxpayer, the French debt being reduced by sixty-two per cent and the Italian by eighty-six per cent. Thus the taxpayer was left with the remission, as these debts were part of our War Debt. Further, as far as France was concerned, the remission was to a country that had already repudiated four-fifths of her National Debt.

He talked about British people who had taken out French loans during the war practically ruined by France's "bilking" of her national obligations. He said Labour policy favoured an all-round cancellation of war debts and reparations, but until then there must be fair-play for Britain.

"I then made," he says, "an observation which was the cause of the row that followed. I said that we had never subscribed to that part of the Balfour Note which laid down that until there was an all-round cancellation of debts and reparations we should not take from our debtors more than was sufficient to pay our debt to America. The Labour Party would hold itself open if circumstances arose to repudiate that condition of the Balfour Note." Churchill at once sensed the electoral possibilities in this blunt statement. The Cabinet sat on it the next morning, and there followed a portentous attack on Labour. Eden was one of those given a chance to enter the fray. To Eden, Snowden's attitude to the general problem was "incredible" and "bad enough" while to the Balfour Declaration it was "very much worse." This declaration, he said, may be termed the foundation-stone upon which the structure of economic Europe has been rebuilt since the Armistice. Eden took it upon himself deeply to regret the consequences of those words. "If

Mr. Snowden felt such resentment at the terms granted to France and Italy that his ire boiled within him, that was bad enough but excusable. But when he combines suddenly and most unexpectedly a John Bull aggressiveness with a Shylock sinister cynicism, the combination is not one which the country would approve or which will raise our credit abroad."

Eden's was undoubtedly a naughty speech, and it was soon shown to be tactically unsound as well. Snowden's plain speaking on the taxpayers' behalf made an immediate appeal. Many Conservative interests, hard hit by the stabilisation of the franc, were favourably impressed. On the other hand, MacDonald, anxious to maintain a good understanding with France, was alarmed at the deplorable effect of Snowden's words on French opinion. A generous foreign policy was Labour's clearest objective. So the conflicting Party policies conspired to subordinate the War Debt issue. Eden did not drop it at once, and repeated his diatribe with some vigour at Leamington. Snowden for his part stuck to his guns, and records it as his opinion that if all Labour candidates had similarly stressed the iniquity of the debt settlement Labour would have been in with a clear majority over both Conservatives and Liberals. As it was Labour did well enough, raising their numbers in the House of Commons to 289, an increase of 137 on the previous Parliament. The Conservatives dropped 155 seats and returned altogether 260 members, while the Liberals, in spite of a heroic effort ("We can conquer unemployment"), were unable to get more than fifty members back. In terms of votes their unemployment manifesto had stronger support than the result suggests; while the Conservatives, who at the last moment had fallen back on a personality parade of Stanley Baldwin—his photograph under the caption "Safety First"—could still command the biggest aggregate.

At this election Eden had to face a three-cornered fight, but he entered it with the utmost vigour. During the six years that he had represented the constituency he had been assiduous in furthering its parliamentary interests. He had been careful to

avoid controversy with the National Farmers' Union, and was no doubt regarded as reasonably sound on the Preference issue. The wheels of his Association ran smoothly, and good reports of Leamington's promising young member were spreading throughout the constituency. Yet it was in many ways the most difficult election he had to fight. The Liberal candidate who succeeded to George Nicholls was a Captain Walter Dingley, who came from Stratford and described himself as "The Local and Liberal Candidate"; while Labour was represented by Mr. G. C. Garton. Dingley put the peace issue first. Our support for the League in all its activities must be wholehearted and zealous. Unemployment without specific reference to Lloyd George came next. Liberalism, too, challenged Eden's prerogative by making a definite appeal to women—a suit which the Labour candidate, Mr. G. C. Garton, somewhat unwisely forgot to press. Mr. Garton presented his compliments, and in his election address appeared in pince-nez and an open-neck shirt. The effect of the "Flapper Vote" was to increase Warwick and Leamington's electoral register from 44,000 to 62,500.

In the circumstances—a new vote, a losing cause, and a third candidate—Eden had every reason to be satisfied with the result. He was returned with a plurality of 5,460 and a total of 23,045 votes. Dingley polled 17,585, and Garton, 7,741. In truth all three candidates had some reason to be pleased with themselves. The last three-cornered fight had been in 1923, and both Eden and the Liberal were 6,000 up on their previous vote; while Labour, which had not fought the constituency since then, was 3,700 up on Lady Warwick's figure. The 1929 election was as a whole indecisive. The result was in line with the attitude of the electorate throughout the country. The nation had given its verdict on what it did not want; what its positive wishes were it left the legislators to puzzle out for themselves.

CHAPTER 9

EXPERIMENTS IN OPPOSITION

THE PERIOD of the second Labour Government was one in which Eden was able to stretch his parliamentary legs and consolidate his status. After a rather unedifying wrangle over the spoils Arthur Henderson took office as Foreign Secretary and made a thorough success of his job. He was a man of persistent purpose and steady ideals, a patient if slow-moving negotiator.

The material for weighty criticism during this period of our diplomacy was meagre and Eden straight away, on the third day of the Debate on the Address when Foreign Affairs were up for consideration, entered into a rearguard action from which he was not fully to emerge for the next two years. Henderson had referred to a resumption of Anglo-Soviet relations, provided the subversive activities—amply cited by Sir Austen in a lurid extract from the *Pravda*—were brought to a close first. All Eden could say was that in a few months' time honourable members opposite might take a rather different view of the speech and would do well to restrain their hilarity until they were satisfied that Mr. Henderson was able to restrain the Third International. The remainder of the speech was a laborious defence of the Conservative Government's attitude to the Optional Clause and the Rhineland evacuation on the grounds that the Socialists, instead of rushing in to fulfil their election pledges, were simply maintaining the good precedents set by Sir Austen Chamberlain.

All Eden could add to this somewhat melancholy tirade before the adjournment were a couple of anxious questions about the Optional Clause, on which he could get no assurance, and about the strained relations between China and

Russia. During the vacation the Socialists met with a number of spectacular successes. Tact and patience brought agreement between France, Belgium, and Germany on the future control of the Rhineland provinces. Snowden by entirely opposite methods of unqualified brusqueness emerged from the Reparations Conference a national hero, while MacDonald had made such progress with the Anglo-American naval talks that he booked his passage to the States to seal the bonds of brotherly love with President Hoover and, in his own words, "narrow the Atlantic." In home affairs there was no comparable achievement, and, as Baldwin aptly pointed out, "the Government had availed themselves of the parliamentary recess to take a holiday from Socialism."

The debate on the resumption of diplomatic relations with Russia produced but few of the fireworks of 1924. The somewhat lukewarm negotiations between M. Dovgalevski and Mr. Henderson, which had at one stage been brusquely broken off, gave the Conservatives some grounds for implying that the Russians were not going to give up their insidious propaganda and that the Labour Party were not in a position to prevent it. On the whole Eden overstated his case. Mr. Henderson had pursued "the worst method of diplomacy that any statesman of this country could ever follow." He had combined strength of speech with weakness in action, and "you can do no greater disservice to your own country's prestige in international affairs than to pursue that policy."

At a somewhat higher debating level was his reply to a powerful plea from Norman Angell on behalf of the so-called Optional Clause and its ratification by Britain as an act of international re-insurance.

"You cannot mechanise peace. Peace, if it comes, is maintained as the result of a feeling growing up among the nations of the world, and all that you have to do is to provide the instruments of interpretation." If then the Optional Clause was potentially superfluous and dangerous Eden was all the same prepared to throw out a memorable challenge. For "there are

times," he added, "in the lives of nations and peoples when it is necessary to take risks, even grave risks, in the cause of world peace." Several such had arisen since the war. There was the Covenant. "Sometimes I think some honourable members have not read the Covenant of the League and do not appreciate the tremendous obligations we have already under it . . ." Locarno was similarly "a grave responsibility." The Foreign Secretary, as the outcome of election pledges, was "driving like Jehu, but in this instance he should be a very Agag."

For the next eighteen months * Eden stuck to his Parliamentary duties with a firm resolve. It was uphill work. The Labour Government's foreign policy continued to flourish and Henderson was all the while reinforced with brilliant back-bench support. Once again it was domestic affairs which slid away from its grasp. From the very beginning the financial situation was serious. Unemployment increased, revenue fell. Churchill's de-rating scheme, which had had such a cold reception when the Conservatives were in power, laid heavy burdens for his successor at the Exchequer. The result was that Snowden had to face a prospective deficit of forty-seven millions in his first Budget. Additions to income-tax, the tax on beer, super-tax, and death duties met immediate needs. But his stern financial orthodoxy earned him few thanks. The Right screamed for Protection, the Left for public works. Conservative speakers referred to him as having a mind that went back to 1880, but for Eden that was several centuries too forward; he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer had a medieval mind. He would have made an admirable minister for the Medici. He could have applied the thumbscrew, rack and stake ruthlessly and happily in the cause of "the fiscal bigotry" he maintained.

Eden then went on—in the case of this particular Budget debate—to make a very frank admission about the attitude of

* About this time, on 3rd October, 1930, Eden's second son, Nicholas, was born. The christening took place on 15th November. Among the god-parents were the present Earl of Scarbrough, whom Eden succeeded as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Sir Austen Chamberlain, and Lady Violet Astor.

himself and his generation to the historic controversy of Free Trade versus Protection. "Perhaps it is true of the younger members," he confessed, "certainly the younger members of our party, that we are merely opportunists in these fiscal matters. I, personally, am prepared to plead guilty to the charge. It seems to me that the only useful test which can be applied in these fiscal controversies which have no academic interest whatever, is the result which is actually achieved."

In the early part of the year Empire Free Trade developed into a crusade against Baldwin. Beaverbrook and Rothermere launched what was virtually their own party, and Conservative leaders took a serious view of the situation. Baldwin succeeded in pricking the bubble of revolt by his usual method—namely, one big, devastating speech to his rank and file supporters. This time, however, he had to make unusually big concessions. Although he adhered to his pledge that food taxes would not be made an issue at the next election, he expressed his willingness to submit the question to the people by the extreme measure of a referendum. This was enough for Beaverbrook, who at once returned to the Conservative Central Office with all the complacency of a prodigal son. But although this crisis was short and sharp it was symptomatic of a general restlessness among Conservatives over Baldwin's leadership. There had been heart-searchings over the result of the last election; there was the straightforward psychological need for a scapegoat—the easy-going Baldwin was the natural culprit and victim. All through the summer the sniping continued. At the end of September he was moved to issue an official statement that there was no truth in the report that he was intending soon to retire from the leadership of the Conservative Party.

In a letter to *The Times* of 2nd October, a good true-blue Tory, Sir Martin Conway, let the public know that Baldwin's policy was not inevitably the milk of the word. Mr. Baldwin and his immediate entourage, he alleged, had made no serious attempt to keep in touch with the mass of their followers. "We

have been treated like sheep and led or driven according to the whims of our shepherds. That is why we suffer the pangs of hunger. We look up and are not fed."

This letter at once provoked what *The Times* called a "Hungry Sheep" correspondence. Mr. Duff-Cooper and Mr. John Buchan leapt to the defence of their leader. Sir Martin replied—the general opinion was that as long as Baldwin remained leader there was no hope of rousing the rank and file to any enthusiasm. He had been among his constituents and only one was in favour of Baldwin.

This encouraged Eden to take up the cudgels on Baldwin's behalf. "How delightful it must have been for Sir Martin Conway to find himself so completely in accord with all his constituents—but one. Rare unanimity and unhappy exception!" If the Conservative Party jettisons Mr. Baldwin it will sacrifice its greatest electoral asset. "But that is not of course the sole reason why many of us would deeply regret to see Mr. Baldwin relinquish the leadership of the Conservative Party." For so long as he was leader "so long will its 'right wing' be unable to dominate the Party's counsels and narrow its purposes—of this the Trade Disputes Bill was a sufficient example; so long also will confidence persist that the Conservative Party can remain truly national both in the source of its strength and in the objectives of its policy. Nor with Mr. Baldwin as its leader will the Conservative Party ever sink to become the creature of millionaire newspaper owners or a mere appanage of big business."

Opposition to a Socialist Government or the specialised discretion of a Parliamentary private secretaryship tended to conceal the key in which Eden's Conservatism was pitched. This letter was no new or sudden change. At the end of 1929 in a speech at Caxton Hall to the Unionist Canvassing Corps—a body whose be-all and end-all was how best to interpret and put across the Party's faith—Eden as the chief speaker had come out boldly for the theory of co-partnership and for the motto "every worker a capitalist!" The hungry sheep debate

was continued—and duly ended—with everyone's righteousness upheld and everyone's conscience cleared.

An interesting Parliamentary sketch of Eden during the Opposition phase of his career appears in *A Hundred Commons*, by James Johnston. He laid stress on Eden's good fortune; he had got through his apprenticeship while still very young, and he belonged to the gilded youth. "He is highly polished, has the bearing and manner of an aristocrat that gives him distinction in a House where the aristocrat is so much rarer than in Parliaments of the past." Eden contrasted well against a background of forceful business men, dull trade union secretaries, intellectual Labourists and aggressive proletarians. But Eden was an exceptional aristocrat, "for there are aristocrats in the House who do not speak in the style expected from their class." Although Eden had a fashionable air there was none of the indifference or indolence that often goes with it. "He is intensely interested in politics, takes his Parliamentary duties most seriously, devotes much study to political questions, and spares no labour to make himself efficient."

The principal impression he conveyed to James Johnston was that of competence. "He has done what only a few politicians take the trouble to do—he has trained his mind, and then he has set himself to master whatever subject he has desired to discuss. He does not create the impression of having raked together knowledge for some immediate debating purpose. He makes one feel that he has a previous familiarity with the subject. He thinks for himself and has a measure of intellectual independence."

CHAPTER 10

NATIONAL MINISTRIES

EDEN was to make one more speech before the financial deluge swept the Labour Government out of office—his last important speech as a back-bench private member until his resignation statement seven years later. The subject was Disarmament. The summer of 1931 was a turning point, not only in the history of this country, but also in the careers of nearly all our major and minor politicians. Although it brought Eden out of the realms of Parliamentary promise into those of international performance, the process of transition was in his case astonishingly smooth and quiet. In all the welter of invective and alarm, frustration and victory, Eden somehow emerged Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the National Government—a promotion at once effortless and inevitable.

He arrived, but not just by accident. In the first place, in the two lean years of the Opposition he had spoken on all aspects of foreign affairs with steadily increasing power and prestige. The questions he asked were key questions. They bore relation to the activity of the Whips. As a Parliamentarian he had proved himself diligent and well informed. His manner was pleasing to those in high authority, nicely balanced between deference and self-assertion, but above all he was, as has been amply shown, a Baldwin man. No serious rival had arisen among Eden's Tory contemporaries to challenge his pre-eminence in foreign affairs and he had backed Baldwin all the way and without reserve. There seems no reason to doubt that he had been in genuine agreement with his leader on nearly every issue of policy, great and small, during all these formative years. Therefore, his fortunes were bound up with Baldwin's—more than once it had seemed that he was backing a losing

cause, that it was to be hero-worship without a dividend. But the particular form of crisis from which the National Government emerged was particularly adapted to Baldwin's political technique—which was to move slowly and mysteriously in the performance of his wonders.

For some time it was in doubt what form the compromise would take. Lord Snowden describes the inscrutable and secret way Mr. MacDonald treated both the colleagues he was leaving and the colleagues he was to join. King George V was a major force behind MacDonald's historic decisions. The Royal will was supposed to have asserted itself roughly along the lines that as Mr. MacDonald has got us into this mess it is for Mr. MacDonald to get us out of it, and that his resignation was thus unacceptable and should be slept upon. This nautical frankness was the outward sign of a profound instinct for public opinion and common sense solutions. During the critical hours Mr. MacDonald kept the National Government to himself. He had a meeting with the Opposition leaders, but Mr. Neville Chamberlain, who was there, declared a few days afterwards that he went to bed that night expecting the next day Mr. Baldwin would be asked to form a Government. But Baldwin could afford to be complacent and self-sacrificing. Beyond the general theme that Party principles must not be sacrificed he made only one fundamental reservation. He would not form a coalition with Mr. Lloyd George in it.

We have detected all through this hostility to Lloyd Georgian Liberalism in Eden—he inherited it from Baldwin. Baldwin was renowned for his friendliness, but he was also a long-term enemy. After the downfall of the Lloyd George coalition, in which he had taken such a dramatic part at the Carlton Club meeting, he is reputed to have emphasised beyond all shadow of doubt that he would never again serve under Lloyd George. All through the period of his predominance we find him up against the Tory of the old coalition days—well to his right in outlook yet beholden to Mr. Lloyd George for election to Parliament by coupon. It is not only orthodox Liberals who

have found to their cost that Mr. Lloyd George, when he tampered with the Nonconformist conscience immediately after the war, did grave damage to it; the Nonconformist Tory, like Mr. Baldwin, has suffered also. At all events Baldwin saw Mr. Lloyd George, whether in the role of friend or enemy, as the real menace to the National Government.

The final crisis arose over the approval of the ten per cent cut in unemployment benefit, and the Labour Government resigned. But within twenty-four hours the new Cabinet of the interim Government, which consisted only of ten senior ministers from all three parties, had been formed. Lord Reading, more as a gesture in the interests of national prestige than as a serious intention to return to the front line of politics, took temporary office as Foreign Secretary. Eden was appointed as his Under-Secretary, and so, an important point to remember, was in harness from the very beginning. Among those of the younger generation who were singled out for junior posts in the Ministry, were Walter Elliott, Kingsley Wood, Oliver Stanley and Duff-Cooper. Thus the National Government contained the elements of perpetuity within itself—the future dominance of the Conservatives was assured.

The first National Government lasted from 25th August to 6th November, 1931. During its seventy-three days of office this administration of all the talents lived on to see the flood of economic crisis seep through into the realms of politics. By the time the dam had been designed and the approval of the people sought and obtained, the world situation was in fact beyond control. At the most critical moment in the history of international relations since the war British foreign policy was technically and morally paralysed. In the first place, Lord Reading's only objective was to keep our policy in a state of animated if lordly suspense until a successor was found; but it was not possible for him to keep warm a seat on the Treasury Bench, and Eden with the best will in the world lacked the status to be an adequate deputy for him in the Commons. The hierarchy of the Foreign Office is rather more select and exalted than those of

the other civil service departments, and it is not always realised that the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is ranked in terms of Foreign Office seniority below the Permanent Under-Secretary. Thus in terms of control over and reference to a document the order in 1931 was Reading, Vansittart, Eden. In the early days of September, 1931, all Eden could do was to act as *rapporteur* of grave events.

On 18th September—a date in many ways as fatal for the long-range hopes of the peacemakers as 4th August—following up a report that a portion of the South Manchurian Railway track had been destroyed by Chinese soldiers from the Petaying barracks, Japanese troops were mobilised, the barracks attacked and taken and the aerodrome and arsenal at Mukden seized. On 23rd September Eden was asked for particulars and supplied the House with the latest information then available. Cantonese troops were advancing northwards towards the positions held by the Chinese Government's troops. No hostilities had broken out. "News today indicates a partial withdrawal of Cantonese forces. The floods in the Yangtse are reported to be subsiding." The full gravity of the news did not make immediate impact on members, and there were some facetious supplementary questions. Eden reported amid the ribaldry that the Chinese had brought the matter before the League Council. On the 24th he described how a special meeting of the Council had been held and an appeal sent to both Governments to abstain from any action that might aggravate the situation, and to take positive steps by way of Geneva to appease it. On 30th September Eden announced that the Japanese had reported the progressive withdrawal of their troops. The Japanese spokesman had also affirmed that Japan had no territorial designs on Manchuria. Question and answer went on until Mr. MacDonald resolved to clarify the National Government's position by an appeal to the country. While Eden was rallying his constituents at Leamington, the Japanese were penetrating the Manchurian hinterland and heading for Tsitsihar. But Manchuria

was not an issue which disturbed a single vote at the General Election. All Eden did in his model Election Address was to ask for national unity to outlive the crisis. The Socialists had been unable to meet a situation of their own making. A Government with the "best elements" from each party was alone large enough for the emergency. With this estimate and appeal the electors of Warwick and the nation concurred. Eden was in with a mighty plurality of 29,000 and an aggregate poll of 38,000, and the Government were returned with what almost amounted to a totalitarian majority of 500. The very magnitude of the victory had the effect of at once widening the scope of Eden's career. Debates in Parliament did not reflect the urgency of the situation outside it, and the opportunity came to Eden at once to represent his country at Geneva without his presence being unduly missed at Westminster.

With the return of the second National Government Lord Reading felt that he had served his commission, asked to be relieved of it, and gave way to Sir John Simon, who, apart from himself, was probably the most eminent Liberal lawyer in the country. For the purposes of Eden's career this change, together with the promotion of Mr. Neville Chamberlain from the Ministry of Health to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer in the place of Snowden, who had retired with a peerage, were moves of the highest significance. By the time the National Government was formed Simon was ready to merge his Liberalism into a permanent alliance with a Conservative majority. By process of trial and error he had come to believe that to accept someone else's initiative was only one degree less dangerous than to initiate a policy oneself. Such an outlook was sooner or later bound to clash with Eden's activist ideas. At the outset there was no clash: the two men worked in separate compartments—Eden was appointed British Delegate to the ill-fated Disarmament Conference. At the beginning of 1932 Disarmament and Reparations were still the embodiments of international Peace and Justice. By the end of

that year both were by the logic of events recognised as will o' the wisps leading the nation into realms of violence and despair.

The Disarmament Conference began its deliberations on 2nd February and so coincided to the day with the Japanese bombardment of Shanghai, described as the heaviest artillery action since 1918. Germany and Russia abstained from the proceedings; Germany, because she could not get equality of status, and the Russians, more bluntly, because they could not get Disarmament on to the agenda. Both Governments claimed the right to put forward their own proposals apart from the 1930 Convention, which was the basis of the Conference's work. Other and lesser States one by one followed their example. For weeks the Conference sat and listened to an endless sequence of schemes from delegates, great and small. Proposals were too numerous to be co-ordinated or digested. From February to the Easter adjournment the Conference was described as being in a state of "suspended animation." In April the American delegate startled his colleagues by submitting a resolution that provided for qualitative as well as quantitative disarmament, though what constituted a specifically aggressive weapon was left to a Technical Commission to unravel. Thereafter the Conference was described as "relapsing into committee work" in which moribund condition it remained until the end of June. No rally was recorded and hope was steadily abandoned.

Then followed President Hoover's famous proposal for a reduction of arms by one-third all round. It is arguable that a clear and immediate acceptance in principle by Britain might have galvanised the Conference into constructive action. But by the middle of July the Hoover plan was, for the purposes of practical politics, dead. The Conference merely used it as a pretext to terminate the first part of its work forthwith. On 20th July, Sir John Simon, his legal skill in full play, presented a Draft Resolution which set out all the points on which all the Governments were in approximate agreement. These were so

few as to exceed the worst fears of the weary delegates. Although the Resolution was in no way a policy it was adopted; Russia and Germany voted against it, and Germany withdrew from the Conference until such time as her status should come up for consideration.

The autumn was devoted to a Franco-German dispute, with Mussolini accepting Germany's equality thesis, and Sir John Simon warning Berlin not to repudiate the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty. The situation hardened into deadlock. An attempt to invoke a Four Power Pact came to nothing; nobody could agree where to meet. Herriot saw MacDonald, and Mussolini made speeches, but with the steady deterioration of events in the Far East, the diplomatic inanity and intransigence of Europe became so unbearable that some Government had to make a move. It came from the Quai d'Orsay—it covered all the ground. As a contribution to peace the French Plan was both logical and extravagant, but it had the effect of rousing Sir John Simon to produce counter-proposals, and the year ended on a note of hope that at least there was some material for further discussion.

Eden had been allowed to play only a relatively modest part in Great Britain's tortuous policy. He hurried between Geneva and Westminster, now examining ratios at the Conference, now explaining to the League Council why Great Britain would have to reduce her subscription, now telling Parliament that he had nothing further to say about the Hoover Plan. In October it was his dismal duty to report to the Cabinet that the Disarmament Conference was damnably near death. How strongly he worded his memorandum we can only surmise, but there are grounds for believing that Eden was not impressed with the view that failure was inevitable. The very complexity of the issues raised by the Disarmament Conference may well have given a new stimulus to his undoubted flair for administrative detail. Cecil was in Geneva most of the time: he had been the one connecting link between the Socialist and National Governments, and during the interregnum the *de facto* British Foreign

Secretary. Then there was the British Delegation to the Disarmament Conference, which was representative and influential.

Eden was surrounded by able men and women to press upon him the urgency of the issues at stake, the possibilities of making the Geneva machine work. He was susceptible to international influences from which the Cabinet was immune. Eden did his best to keep the Cabinet fully informed, and on occasions submitted memoranda which included his personal recommendations on matters of policy. Simon allowed them to filter through for discussion without adding any comments of his own.

CHAPTER 11

PROGRESS IN LOST CAUSES

IN ORDER to show to the world that Disarmament had our "earnest consideration," the British Government opened its 1933 account with almost an excess of zeal. It submitted an ambitious "programme of work," which it suggested should be taken up as soon as the Conference had eliminated a French plan. Like the latter it was more grandiose in language than significant in meaning, and offered substantial hope only in as far as it suggested some revision of Part V of the Versailles Treaty, which was concerned with German disarmament. But the French plan had to be discussed first, and on 3rd February Eden made an important statement on the theme of that eternal challenge to European settlement and peaceful change—French security.

France was wanting new securities. Eden asked pertinently whether in the search for them the French might not fall into the trap of forgetting existing guarantees. To reiterate a guarantee was not necessarily to strengthen it. In the eyes of the British Government the guarantees already covering France were "real and substantial." Locarno, in Eden's view, had marked the close of the chapter of the immediate post-war period in Europe and had opened a new one, as yet unfinished. Eden asked that the example of Locarno should be followed—we had signed in the hope that it would be—and that other nations would settle their regional difficulties in the same way. But as far as Great Britain was concerned, in our League membership and in our Locarno signature, we had gone as far as we could go in assuming definite commitments in Europe. He ended by offering no encouragement that Great Britain

could modify this attitude. To any new obligations the British people were "unalterably opposed." Although this statement was meant to be cold comfort, the Geneva statesmen were not unduly discouraged; indeed, they were pleased with Great Britain's new spokesman.

But the men in charge of Disarmament during 1933 were looking after a lost cause. Hindenburg by abandoning Bruening in his hour of need for the deplorable von Papen had let the Trojan horse into the Wilhelmstrasse. By March, 1933, the intrigues of Schleicher and of Papen were blown away like dry leaves before the hurricane of the Nazi advance. Hitler was Chancellor and the torches of his storm-troopers in endless night procession were new symbols of the terrible old doctrines of blood and fire. Even Geneva had to respond to the demands of strength. During February Japan was declared in solemn conclave to be the aggressor in Manchuria. How could the declaration be brought to life?

For a moment Great Britain was prepared to act alone. Having tried without success to reach international agreement over the export of arms to the Far East the British Government decided to impose an embargo on its own initiative. Simon put it forward more as a moral gesture than for any practical effect it might have. But it was strength only in appearance. Geneva saw it as a move strangely incompatible with our League obligations; Japan was the aggressor, the ban should apply to Japan only. The British Government, however, was aware that no one followed its example, and at the end of March decided to abandon the embargo and substitute for it "vigorous conversations."

Disarmament continued to be the issue which caused the greatest disillusionment in this country; the vacillations of Geneva were regarded with greater dismay by the British electorate than the bombings of Shanghai. Throughout the spring and summer while Eden continued to press for strong action the Conference got trapped in a jungle of sub-committees. The

various proposals were examined for their technical implications and found wanting.

In this atmosphere Disarmament was stifled, but not before a supreme effort had been made by Great Britain to give the old objectives a new urgency. Eden had had to struggle on as the Government's principal representative at the Conference. At the beginning of March he returned to England to make a trenchant and disquieting report to the Cabinet. The position of the Conference he described as being critical.

After earnest consideration the Cabinet decided to reinforce Eden's efforts by sending over both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. On the 16th March, MacDonald produced the famous Draft Convention from an oration of overwhelming Celtic passion and prolixity. This he followed up by a lightning visit to Rome and laid before Mussolini the first of the panic pacts—the Four-Power Pact, which, apart from the purposes of general collaboration, stressed revision of the Peace Treaties. MacDonald is reported to have found in the Duce's ideas "a wonderful affinity" to his own.

MacDonald, like Haldane in pre-war days, had a habit of wrapping himself round in superfluous mystery. As he would not encourage true reports, false and startling rumours were allowed to spread. It was notorious that efforts had been made to bring Hitler and Mussolini to Geneva, but Hitler had refused on the good grounds that he had only just a few days before become a Government and needed a little time to consolidate; as for Mussolini, it was necessary for the Scottish mountain to go to the new Mahomet. What had Great Britain achieved? Had we become entangled in an eternal European intrigue, or made a considered contribution to European appeasement?

On the 24th March MacDonald made a bewildering statement in the House, the length of which was second only to its obscurity, but in principle it appeared that Mussolini had handed over a document containing his thoughts on the best way to achieve peace between the four Western Powers. It was

to be done by means of a pact to last ten years which was to be concluded "within the framework" of the League. The moribund Article XIX of the Covenant (with its revision clauses) was to be reinstalled. MacDonald was not asked to take it or leave it—simply to think it over. This he did, and put forward his view that, provided the special interests of the smaller Powers were adequately guarded, the Italian Plan was too big an opportunity to miss. He would not care to incur the responsibility of setting it aside. We were entering a diplomatic road which was to lead five years later by inexorable progression to Munich and total war. On the whole there was a favourable response to MacDonald's meanderings, except from Winston Churchill.

Churchill was the most notable absentee from the National Government; Baldwin had apparently decided when the parties had made their selection that if appeasement was to be the watchword of our policy, Winston was potentially more dangerous in office than out of it. This may or may not have been a sound estimate, but the Churchill trumpet, which might—for a time at least—have been silenced with a Cabinet mute, now brayed defiance from the back benches. The battle-cries were India and Arms, and with tremendous and consistent invective Churchill soon became the Government's most formidable rebel.

On this occasion he denounced disarmament conferences which in his view actually did more harm than good, and asked the House to realise that military preponderance was the Empire's sure foundation. The revolution in Germany that was accompanying his words he cited as reinforcing his thesis. The principal effect of MacDonald's intervention in foreign affairs during the past four years had been to bring Great Britain nearer to war than ever before. Let him pay proper attention to urgent domestic tasks and leave foreign affairs to competent ambassadors and accepted diplomatic channels.

This brought Eden to his feet to engage in a counter attack which at least serves as a reminder that Eden's views were at

the outset far from Churchillian. For Mr. Churchill to assert that the Prime Minister had been responsible for the deterioration in international relations during the past four years was a "mischievous absurdity." It was an assertion all the more regrettable, in that it might obtain abroad a measure of authority which the House did not give it. He went on to show how the pre-war diplomacy was not a particularly good precedent for the successful conduct of international relations: it had led inexorably to the experience of 1914, which the Government today were doing all in their power to avoid. In the great attempt surely it was worth while to give a new method a trial. The Government was not expecting success at once but "any gospel is better than a gospel of despair." Mr. Churchill's thesis had been that it was vital to bring France and Germany closer together; what better step could be taken to this end than the Prime Minister's pilgrimage to Rome?

It is reported that Eden's championship of his chief was warmly applauded by the House, even if members left the debate somewhat mystified by the Pact. Indeed from a Parliamentary and Governmental point of view Eden emerged with far more prestige and popularity than MacDonald and Simon, who had had the responsibilities of negotiation.

In June, the Four-Power Pact was signed, but it was still-born. Its terms of reference were so modified as to lack substantive meaning. It had all been signed before. It merely coincided with intense diplomatic activity in Geneva during the summer and autumn culminating in Germany's dramatic withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the League. The conclusion was inevitable; no pact or patchwork of tentative arbitration could resist the momentum of the new Germany. European diplomacy henceforth turned upon the recognition that Germany was once again a Great Power in the making.

Throughout the summer Eden was engaged in discussion with the French Premier Daladier. They were searching for a policy the discovery of which was to coincide with its defeat. Precious months were wasted.

In the summer, Arthur Henderson, who had struggled so valiantly for Disarmament and was undoubtedly successful in giving the Conference a modicum of dignity and prestige, went on his Disarmament pilgrimage; but although everyone wished him well he was regarded as going beyond his terms of reference if he suggested that some of the statesmen interested should get together and work out a joint plan. Hitler was not yet ready to meet Daladier, Daladier was offended at the suggestion that he should meet Hitler. In September, Eden and Davis and Daladier were again engaged in exchange of views in Paris, only this time the talks were not tripartite but in compartments, Franco-American, Anglo-French, Anglo-American. Henderson was in Paris too, but nothing had happened which made it worth while asking him to join in the discussions. He was left to keep in touch with the negotiations as best he could.

By October the general situation was critical. Nazi pressure on Austria was increasing; it was known that Germany was in fact rearming on a substantial scale. Eden, however, was able to make some progress with the negotiations, for he was in a position to indicate with due reservations a more favourable reaction in Downing Street to French ideas on security. His talks were important too as indirectly helping to improve Franco-Italian relations, which ever since the Naval Treaty negotiations of 1930 had been steadily deteriorating.

So by the time the League Assembly opened there was general agreement between France, Italy, Great Britain and the United States on how disarmament should be carried out. As far as Germany was concerned it meant another delay in her access to equality of status. At first it looked as though the Germans were anxious to go a long way to get agreement. There were informal but intense negotiations between Paul-Boncour, Simon, Eden, Suvich and Davis on the one hand, and between these "allies" and Neurath and Goebbels on the other; but it soon became evident that real progress was not possible. Nothing that the "allies" offered was sufficient to compensate Goebbels for the possible loss of his anti-Versailles propaganda. Italy

began significantly enough to act as mediator, recognising Germany's moral right to any arms which the other Powers decided to keep for themselves.

By the end of September there was deadlock. Simon and Eden and the other principal delegates left Geneva, all solemnly referring themselves back to their respective capitals for further instructions. What did the Germans mean by "samples"? Nobody knew, and Germany would not tell. At the beginning of October, Baldwin tried to put things right by addressing through the Conservative Conference a solemn warning to the world that the consequences of the failure to achieve Disarmament would mean ruin to European civilisation. But the atmosphere was poisoned. Events were at last forcing France and Great Britain into closer collaboration.

In July, the German War Minister had asked permission to buy twenty-five aeroplanes from us; the request brought a brusque refusal and an added interest in France's allegations about German rearmament. Britain and France together were forced to protest about the German attitude to foreign shipping countries.

Simon was discouraged. Had he not argued that the Disarmament Conference should be continued without postponement? Had he not used all his influence to keep its headquarters at Geneva? On 14th October he went to the Conference, and in cold precise terms accused Germany of having shifted her course in the preceding weeks. There was immense indignation in Berlin, and before there was time to turn round the news flashed across the world that Germany had left the Disarmament Conference and followed up this drastic action by giving notice of her resignation from membership of the League of Nations. Hitler had struck the first of his blows at the Europe of Versailles.

It was the gravest news bulletin that the wireless had so far carried, but the British people as a whole took the news calmly.

But what was our attitude to be to Germany from now on-

wards? We all agreed to condemn her action. To Henderson it was "premature and unfortunate," to Neville Chamberlain "hasty and ill-advised"—but that was not enough, the Cabinet resolved that the door should be left ajar. Germany was free to resume Disarmament discussions whenever she saw fit. The Prime Minister informed Hitler that he accepted the words Hitler had used in favour of peace on their face value. This attitude, however, failed to take the sting out of the Opposition.

A by-election fought on foreign policy at East Fulham, the result of which we now know made a profound impression on Baldwin's mind and morale, saw a Conservative majority of 14,500 turned into a Labour majority of 4,800. Labour also won in the municipal elections throughout the country. The cry was that the Government were warmongers, and the public, it seemed, agreed.

What was Eden's attitude? His experience at Geneva cannot have led him to believe in the prospects of a genuine settlement with the Nazis. He had felt the full force of Goebbels. To Eden this man must have been the personification of all that was most extreme and sinister in National Socialism. The Opposition might gain points for a while, but how could one arbitrate with Goebbels when Goebbels by every act and statement rejected arbitration as a principle of State policy?

Some such considerations must have been at the back of Eden's mind when in a by-election speech at Skipton he made a powerful effort to stem the tide of public feeling that was rising against the Government. "However much we may deplore Germany's action this is no occasion," he said, "for alarmist language, still less for the scaremongering which has been indulged in in certain quarters during the last few weeks." The situation could assuredly be redeemed, but to do so they must keep their heads and their engagements. A campaign was being fostered, principally by Lord Beaverbrook, against Locarno, but Locarno was still "one of the most effective instruments for Peace in Europe." No doubt this passage was for German consumption; at least it showed a ready understanding of the direc-

tion in which Germany was heading. Eden developed the point. No British Government was "blindly fettered" to Locarno, but it meant certain precise obligations. "Some people seem to imagine," he added, "that if they were furnished with some means of escape from what they are pleased to call the commitments of Locarno they would then be less likely to be involved in a European war; but the very opposite is, of course, the truth." We could not avoid another war simply by saying that in no circumstances would we go to the aid of a power unjustly attacked. Great Britain is a Great Power with the responsibilities of a Great Power and if we fail to discharge them we shall invite the disaster which will follow.

CHAPTER 12

LORD PRIVY SEAL AT LARGE

JANUARY 1st, 1934, found Eden the recipient of a formidable New Year Honour. He was promoted to the free-lance post of Lord Privy Seal—one of two offices which Baldwin had kept warm by reserving it to himself and which he could accordingly present to anyone for conversion to any use. *The Times* Parliamentary Correspondent noted that “the appointment was received with approval by all sections of the House. He has made no enemies and many friends.” The truth is that his work at Geneva had brought him an immense personal prestige in Parliament. Hard on his appointment came the news of a German note to France reiterating her minimum demands—a short service army of 300,000 men and adequate “defensive” weapons. These went far beyond our Draft Convention and it was clear that France would reject them out of hand. The Government came to the conclusion that a new declaration of British policy was urgently needed, so it produced a Memorandum with its revised views on Disarmament.

This Memorandum was subtle in its compromise. It did not save Disarmament but it made Eden. On 6th February Sir John Simon explained the Memorandum, and in doing so announced that as a means of turning it to the best account the Lord Privy Seal would as soon as possible visit Paris, Rome and Berlin in order to explain the British point of view, and to find out by direct contact the reactions of the other Governments to the Memorandum.

Eden left for his first grand tour on 16th February. He was entering a bloodstained, infuriated Europe. But a week before, fifteen people had been killed and over two hundred wounded

in the Place de la Concorde. The financial scandals associated with the name of Stavisky had caused the downfall of two Governments. Daladier's handling of the situation had brought France to the verge of anarchy. In this perilous situation the French President had called upon the aged Gaston Doumergue, himself a former President, to provide the semblance of unity for the immediate requirements of law and order. In Austria the pocket Dictator Dollfuss had outraged the opinion of the world by his savage overthrow of the Democratic Republic. For three days and nights howitzers and machine guns, field guns and trench mortars fired into the Karl Marx Hof. A conservative estimate of the slaughter between 12th and 15th February puts the dead at one thousand and the wounded at five thousand. Thus did the Heimwehr maintain its sovereignty. Thus did the virus of Fascism spread to the dreamy city of Vienna. In this atmosphere of hatred, revenge and summary execution, Eden on Disarmament was a voice in the wilderness.

He spent three days in Paris, but the tension was not sufficiently relaxed to admit of a detailed exchange of view with the responsible ministers. It was agreed that Eden should return to Paris after his visits to Berlin and Rome, for there were the perils of further disorder in Austria. Germany was watching every move in the situation.

Eden arrived in Berlin on 20th February and there were meetings straight away. First of all Eden, with Sir Eric Phipps, the British Ambassador in Berlin, met Neurath and Blomberg. Neither of these men were Nazi Party Members, though both believed from their specialised standpoints—Foreign Office and Army—that National Socialism was an absolute necessity for Germany. Both were sincere in their admiration of the dictatorship and the dictator. All through Neurath proved himself a courteous and rational negotiator. On the other hand it must have been clear to Eden when the interview with Hitler began that everything was subordinated to the will and temperament of this incalculable man.

It was the first personal contact Hitler had made with an

important representative of a Great Power. Eden was thus at this moment an essential factor in Hitler's prestige. But three weeks before, German diplomacy had secured its first great diplomatic success—the ten-year military Pact with Pilsudski's Poland. Rumour—well founded, too—asserted that Pilsudski had given Hitler twenty-four hours to sign that Pact, and that Polish troops had been massed on the German frontier.

But if the young British Ambassador of Peace knew rather more about the circumstances of Hitler's first diplomatic venture than was convenient, he did not allow his knowledge to do anything other than confirm his belief in the sincerity of Hitler's desire for appeasement. Speaking formally and on behalf of his Government, Eden had to put before Hitler two unpalatable proposals: first, that the Germans should have no military aircraft for two years, and secondly that they should consent to return to Geneva. Finally Eden had to ask about the proposed ten years' duration of the Disarmament Convention.

The talks were cordial. Hitler liked Eden's good manners. This young English statesman had polish, he was suave but he was keen. He had the essential faculty for success with Hitler; for he could listen quietly and intelligently, supplying him with a new theme whenever his ideas seemed to be running dry. It was impossible to stop Hitler talking; the art was in preventing him from becoming turgid. *The Times* reported that "Mr. Eden and Herr Hitler appear to have got on very well together. They find common ground in their service in the trenches which appeals particularly to the German Chancellor." On 20th February the impression in Berlin was that the visit had been well worth while. The rumours were that the meetings might be prolonged. They were. On 21st February a diplomatic barrier was broken down when Hitler took lunch at the British Embassy for the first time. Neurath, Hess and Goebbels were there as well. Yesterday's favourable impressions were maintained.

It was during this lunch that Corporal Hitler and Captain Eden exchanged their war memoirs to the extent of working out on the back of a menu the location of their sectors on the

Somme. They discovered that they were opposite each other. The informal nature of the talks was duly stressed, but they were prolonged for another day. Finally he saw Germany's grand old man—the President, Hindenburg—feeble and resigned to the strange events that surged dimly round him. By August he was dead, and Hitler with a brusque nervousness had consigned him to Valhalla.

The Germans assured Eden that their demands were modest. Their air force requirements were purely defensive. They still wanted a short-term army of 300,000, but were prepared to control the S.A. and S.S. formations and to establish their non-military character. *The Times* gave a hopeful summary of the visit. The problems did not seem quite so hard, Germany's attitude was clearer. The Memorandum would serve as a basis for further discussion. Eden had done well.

On 25th February Eden was in Rome. Once again there was an impressive round of formal festivity, beginning with a dinner party at the British Embassy which the French and German Ambassadors attended, and at which the chief Italian guest was the impassive Baron Aloisi. Eden at Geneva in a mere eighteen months was to encounter him under less favourable auspices. But Aloisi was a professional diplomatist—indignations and felicitations came alike to him.

On the next day at 5:00 P.M. sharp in the flamboyant reception room at the Palazzo Venezia, Eden had his fatal meeting with Mussolini himself. Undoubtedly Eden was meeting Benito Mussolini in one of his most dangerous moods. A re-orientation of policy was at the back of his mind. The addition of Hitler to the already overcrowded list of European dictators was involving the Duce in some fundamental decisions: if Great Britain had any contribution to make to the store of his ideas it was advisable for us to send over a Minister of substantive rank, not some petty fledgling whose status did not even allow him access to the Cabinet.

For Mussolini had by now realised that the Nazis had come to stay—and even to expand. If a new Roman Empire was to

grow it would have to grow at someone's expense. The obvious victims were Germany in Eastern Europe or Great Britain in the Mediterranean. Should the Duce pit his fragile resources against the New Germany or the Old England? In the light of these formidable considerations, which from Marshal de Bono's book on the Abyssinian War we now know were occupying him throughout 1934, the presence of Anthony Eden with a tiresome questionnaire on Disarmament was not calculated to take the pout from his lips. Eden, too, was annoyed at the blatant attempt of Italy to hold the balance between France and Germany. That was Great Britain's role.

The main result of the talk with which the newspaper men had to juggle was that Eden had decided to leave Rome a day earlier than he had originally arranged. *The Times* did its best to explain away the change of plan, and attributed the brevity of the meeting and visit to their success. It was at pains to confuse the issue by pointing out that Mussolini had "a more flexible mentality" than the other dictators, but as a tribute to bare fact it was bound also to report after the interview that Eden "was entertained at dinner tonight by Signor Suvich instead of Signor Mussolini." The Duce did not even bother to turn up—a more than usually specious diplomatic illness sufficed to explain his absence. Eden, however, actually did stay over to the 28th, had further talks with the Ambassadors, and dined at the French Embassy. He was also received in private audience by the Pope and had the chance of meeting his experienced Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli.

On 1st March, Eden was back again in Paris, and this time he was able to see Doumergue and Barthou, although he did not succeed in wringing any satisfactory concession from them. France was still unwilling to admit any rearming of Germany as legal. The Italian scheme, which narrowed the duration of the Convention from ten years to six years, was perhaps a slight improvement on the British Memorandum, but when Eden returned to London and at once saw MacDonald, Simon and Baldwin, there was little for him to report but an occasional

anecdote. It would seem that Hitler emerged from the *viva voce* with the top marks, but he alone of the candidates was ineligible for a prize.

When the French reply to the British Memorandum came it was evident that Eden's effort to bridge the gulf had failed. Its tone was stiff and formal, the exaggerated claims of Germany to rearm did not in their view constitute a very good argument for other Powers to disarm. Barthou was waiting for the Germans to show the mailed fist, which they duly did three days later. An official German statement showed considerable increases in the expenditure on all three arms of German defence for the year 1934. The German Ambassador had the excuses ready; the conversion of the Reichswehr into a short-term army was an expensive job, as was the cost of "renovating" the German Navy. It was all as Barthou had prophesied. France's definitive answer to the British inquiries came through at once. It was to the effect that there was now nothing to answer. The German statement made it necessary for France to break off negotiations, the basis of which Germany had "by its own act destroyed."

During the next few weeks the Disarmament Committee of the Cabinet held a number of anxious and lengthy meetings. The agenda was, first, whether further effort should be made to reconcile France and Germany, and, second, if not, whether immediate steps should be taken to look to our defences. During these deliberations Mussolini sent over his Foreign Secretary, Suvich, and Hitler his confidant, the ambitious champagne merchant, Joachim von Ribbentrop. Suvich came first, and so successful was he in reinforcing the Cabinet in its resolve not to join any anti-German *bloc* that Ribbentrop, when he arrived, found most of his work done for him. Suvich's easy success was for Eden something of a rebuff, and it is about this time that Eden and Simon began to draw apart in their public pronouncements. While Simon was making "friendly inquiries" into Japanese aggressive intentions, Eden proclaimed the need

for democracy to unite in defence of its ideals and went out of his way to avoid the storm of criticism which Simon's bland cynicism had attracted.

The Cabinet's final decision was to do nothing until the Disarmament Conference met again, and when it met to listen but not to initiate. Simon was once again accused of letting disarmament slide and of putting too much trust in the Japanese. Baldwin's reply was "put your trust in the Government." But Eden was not so sanguine, and in an address to Conservative women—this time at the Queen's Hall—on Disarmament—he freely admitted that his European tour had been a failure. From Geneva he broadcast "at no time has the outlook been as black as it is now." To his constituents at Warwick his frank estimate of the European situation was that "We have in no sense solved the main difficulties."

Then in September, Eden was broadcasting from Geneva the hope that Russia's entry to the League would be successfully achieved. A week later, with due solemnity, it was. Only Switzerland, Portugal and Holland recorded their opposition, but this impression of slight dissent was obliterated not simply by the support of Eden, Barthou, Beneš and Madariaga who said what was expected of them, but, significantly enough, by Aloisi and Colonel Beck as well.

CHAPTER 13

MURDER IN MARSEILLES

AT THE end of September, 1934, Eden visited Sweden and Denmark in order to explain to these oases of democracy the meaning of the new appeasement.* His "hard work" was especially praised, and his success was attributed to his method of negotiation. "He, like his hosts, is not solemn, but cheerfully serious when he discusses serious matters." There were serious matters to discuss, matters not on the agenda.

On the afternoon of 9th October, 1934, M. Barthou received King Alexander of Yugoslavia at Marseilles. Conversations had been arranged in order to confirm and develop Yugoslavia's participation in the French system and in order to prepare the way for the long awaited *rapprochement* between France and Italy. The royal car had scarcely left Marseilles harbour when a Croat terrorist ran out of the crowd, jumped on the running board, fired at the King, killing him outright, and severely wounding M. Barthou, who died a few hours afterwards. Once again the peace of Europe was in the balance, and months of patient negotiation came to nought. The assassin was proved to be the member of a large scale terrorist organisation. He was in possession of a Czech passport visaed in Hungary. These facts helped to invest the situation with the utmost international gravity.

Jugoslav-Hungarian friction was of long standing, and had been intensified by the friendly reception given by Hungary to Jugoslav exiles from King Alexander's dictatorship. There had

* Although the mission was dismissed as having no special political significance Eden himself made a great hit in the Scandinavian countries. They were anxious to claim him as one of their own, and a Swedish genealogist went so far as to present him with a family tree tracing his descent from Eric IX, King of Sweden, who died in 1160, and through Margaret, daughter of Christian I of Denmark, and wife of James III of Scotland.

been numerous frontier incidents, and between March, 1929, and March, 1934, no less than twenty cases of crimes due to Hungary had been alleged by Yugoslavia.

None of the principal Powers concerned was prepared to exploit the crisis to the last extremity. Eden's personal intervention as *rapporteur* for the League turned the vague underlying desire for peace into a concrete settlement. The whole episode can be regarded as setting a precedent and pattern for Eden's diplomatic techniques in arbitration which were to culminate twenty years later at Geneva and help in bringing a war to an end in Indo-China.

The immediate reaction in Yugoslavia was a truce between the various party factions and the setting up of a strong Regency. Both Italy and Hungary were disconcerted by the crime, but from the beginning behaved with extreme correctness. France too was cautious. For behind all the diplomatic pressure Paris and Rome were bound together by a mutual fear of Berlin. Italy climbed down, and in order to avoid any accusation of harbouring Croat terrorists, left Hungary to face Yugoslavian threats alone in the League Council. Relations, which had been deplorable ever since the War, began to improve during 1933, and at the beginning of January, 1934, a commercial treaty between the two nations had actually been signed. But then the old suspicions began to develop again.

In November, Yugoslavia invoked Article XI in strong terms. The Hungarians replied at once through Eckhardt, their delegate to the Assembly. He agreed with Yugoslavia that peace was in danger, but the responsibility for the state of tension lay with the Yugoslav Government and Press.

In an atmosphere of bitter invective if well prepared prolixity, Anthony Eden's plea was that the discussion should be limited to the actual subject on the agenda and that all grievances not strictly relevant to it should be excluded. This sane and matter-of-fact attitude led to his appointment, amid general acclamation and without noticeable objection from the protagonists, as *rapporteur*. So intense were the discussions of

detail and policy, right and wrong, that Eden was the self-same evening in a position to put before colleagues at a further meeting of the Council the draft of a resolution to cover every aspect of the dispute.

This resolution is in many ways the high-water mark of League arbitration.

Those who are sceptical of the resources of diplomacy should ponder over the terms of the settlement. Although Eden called the Hungarian Government to order he levels no clear-cut accusation against it, nor does he suggest its acquiescence in any procedure incompatible with national sovereignty. The *Survey of International Affairs* for 1934 stresses the "notable contrast offered here to the Austro-Hungarian Government's ultimatum of 23rd July, 1914"—the outcome of similar circumstances—"but in which the plaintiff of the day had not only formulated his own accusation against the defendant, but had insisted on his own representatives taking part in judicial investigations on the plaintiff's territory." The outcome of Eden's mediation was a formula "acceptable to Hungary at the same time comprising other features which commended it to Yugoslavia."

Thanks to Mr. Eden's tact and Herr Hitler's shadow, the resolution was adopted unanimously by the members of the Council, including the parties concerned. Actually in Budapest and Belgrade alike the settlement was accorded a sincere welcome, and Eden accorded praise in terms usually associated with military glory.

But this is not all, for at the very time that Eden was reconciling Belgrade with Budapest over Marseilles, he was doing the same with Berlin and Paris over the Saar. In the historic Saar plebiscite the decisive initiative at the decisive hour rested with him.

As the time for the plebiscite drew nearer, uneasiness in Europe spread. It was one of the problems the Allies had shelved, not from any deep conviction that time would solve it,

but because French economic interest and political pretension were so deeply ingrained as to defy compromise. Hitler identified the return of the Saar with the removal of the one obstacle to Franco-German reconciliation. He said so in his broadcast speech when Germany left the League. The following month he made a formal request to the French Ambassador for the return of the territory. He returned to the attack in his speech to the Reichstag on 30th January, 1934.

For France there were innumerable difficulties. It was alien to her security to make arrangements outside the framework of the League, while the behaviour of local Nazis gave grounds for legitimate concern and caution. The painstaking impartiality of Mr. Knox, the High Commissioner, was converted by an even more painstaking German propaganda into a régime of terror. On the whole the French were not in the mood to make generous concessions. One of Barthou's last public acts was to stress in a speech to the Council, France's "exceptional interest" in and "special responsibilities" for the Saar.

In this atmosphere the British Government was instinctively cautious and detached. The French attitude might be "entirely proper" but the contingencies feared were not likely to arise—"they did not therefore propose at present to take any special action in the matter."

It was from Laval, Barthou's successor, that the first signs of conciliation from either side came. He asked that the duty of keeping order should be assigned to international contingents, and suggested that France would willingly agree not to send one if Germany would do the same.

The British response was immediate. Eden, as the British delegate, dismissed all former inhibitions, and stated beyond doubt that if the Council thought an international force in the Saar was desirable, the United Kingdom Government would be prepared to co-operate, "because of their wish to make a positive contribution to the discharge of the responsibility which all those present shared as members of the League of Nations." Whatever motives may have prompted the British Government

to this *volte-face*, whether they were Mr. Knox's forebodings, Laval's conciliations or Germany's strong right arm, the world reaction was most formidable. Britain, it seemed, was aware that isolation was not enough, and a new and forceful leader in the person of Anthony Eden was to lead the First Crusade for international order and justice.

Eden's reputation was embarrassed by the disclosure that the British decision had been taken at a full meeting of the Cabinet some time before, when it unanimously agreed to let Eden make the proposal if he thought fit. Eden had had an interview with Knox at Geneva and was so impressed with the urgency of the situation that he pressed the Government for its final consent. Never before had a contingent of the British army crossed the Channel to play the role of a police escort, to protect life and not to destroy it.

For Eden, 1934 closed with high prospects and a soaring prestige. As for the Saar it had done something to vindicate the Treaty of Versailles, the work of international commissions and the potentialities of the new diplomacy.

If Hitler's claim that the Saar was the one outstanding question between France and Germany was valid, was it too much to suggest that the New Year of 1935 would herald Peace and Goodwill in the West?

But the progress was illusory: there was to be no respite. From January, 1935, Eden's career was to be caught up in the tragic progression of events that led to the second world conflict in our time. Set against the widening shadow of German rearmament, the Abyssinian aggression, the Rhineland occupation and the War in Spain were the three great diplomatic issues of the immediate future. Although the final outcome has been firmly defined by Churchill as the "unnecessary war," in all these particular crises Eden never had a full initiative. He never commanded a united opinion, a united Cabinet and a complete authority over foreign affairs at one and the same time. When public opinion was in fact, and the Cabinet nominally, behind him, he was either a subordinate or a partner; when the Cabinet

was in fact behind him over the abandonment of Sanctions, public opinion wanted him to resign; when he wanted firm guarantees from Mussolini, the Cabinet forced him to resign. He arrived too late on the scene to take opinion and authority by the scruff of the neck and force the world situation into his own ways of thinking.

The tragedy begins with Laval's effort to follow up Barthou's work in Eastern Europe and his own success with the Saar, by a visit to Rome. It was clear that Laval had identified the prestige of himself and of the new Flandin administration with a Franco-Italian settlement of outstanding questions; it was less clear how the one outstanding question that really mattered, the tension on the frontier between Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland was to be settled. If Mussolini meant to manipulate a war with Haile Selassie, it was difficult to see how France could acquiesce short of a complete reorientation of her foreign policy. A threat to a weak state in Africa was by definition at Geneva a threat to a weak state in Europe; a threat to a weak state in Europe was by definition at the Quai d'Orsay an attack on the French system of security by re-insurance.

Laval, however, was prepared to take this logical risk for the substance of a quick, short-term Roman triumph. The strain put on Franco-Italian relations after the murder of King Alexander, the obvious implication of the Italian Government in that crime, called for drastic remedy. It would have been satisfactory to discuss the whole question of appeasement in the Danube basin and Central Europe. But the Italians were resolved to limit the agenda for the present to colonies and Austria. Had not Mussolini kept the peace of Europe by guaranteeing Austrian independence and mobilising a quarter of a million men on the Brenner Pass when the Nazis murdered Dollfuss?

On 3rd January, the day before Laval's arrival in Rome, in view of the sinister secrecy of the Italians, Abyssinia had appealed to the League under Article XI of the Covenant.

Efforts were at once made to persuade Abyssinia to suspend her appeal. Laval was angry; nothing could have been more ill-timed than this appeal. His mind was hardening against the infuriating rigidity of League procedure. Mussolini was angry. Laval's efforts to adjust France's Libyan frontier were so much chicanery. The Duce is reported to have said that he was no collector of deserts. But although Laval's reception was cool and the final rejoicings artificial, the real business was apparently done at a reception held by the French Ambassador, at the Farnese Palace.

There were all the outward appearances of success, but very little was really granted. Mussolini had deferred most of the problems; he promised more bayonets on the Brenner; but the Anschluss crisis had already died down. From the French point of view at the time, the Duce had not gained much, a few miles of sand near Libya not far from Lake Tchad, the small island of Dommira opposite Perim making possible the control of the outlets to the Red Sea towards the Indian Ocean, and finally a share in the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway, the only motor road from Abyssinia to the Red Sea. "So it came about that the agreements of Rome hastened the realisation of Mussolini's imperialistic dream."

Anthony Eden was speaking at Edinburgh in the New Year. Success bred confidence and confidence bold words. Arising out of the Franco-Italian agreement he let it be known that "balance of power is no longer British policy, ours is League policy. . . . Those who scoffed at the Saar have been shaken and I almost said silenced; but it is impossible that Lord Beaverbrook and silence could be on more than nodding acquaintance." He ended up with the hope that 1935 would see the success of disarmament. Laval's success in Rome was followed by his talks in London and the publication of the communiqué foreshadowing a Western Air Pact. It was agreed that Simon and Eden should go to Berlin to explain and explore the Pact's possibilities with Hitler—who was alleged to be interested.

The disenchantment was not long in coming. The publica-

tion of the first major British White Paper on Defence without any accompanying assurance as to the Policy it was supposed to defend at once caused Hitler to contract a sore throat.

Then the decision was taken by France after anxious debate and ample excuse, to lengthen army service to two years, a year before schedule. The technical reason was that France was entering upon the lean years. Enlistment quotas were bound to fall between 1935 and 1939. It was necessary to forestall this inevitable calamity.

Hitler announced the existence of a German Air Force and inaugurated conscription. Surely this was more than British complacence could condone. It was not. Actually he had merely shocked the world by giving public validity to a secret the world shared.

Notes passed between London and Berlin, assurances were exchanged and Eden declared that "in the work that lies ahead of us in the capitals of Europe, our faith in the collective peace system must play a prominent part." At last it was possible to announce that the arrangements for the visit to Berlin were to stand, but that out of deference to French feelings Eden would cross the Channel in advance of Simon and meet French and Italian representatives in Paris first.

By the time this courtesy call had been carried out France and Italy had sent in yet another of their stern protests to Berlin against the unilateral repudiation of treaties, while Sir John in a crowded and anxious House made a statement precise but wholly uncommunicative. Old George Lansbury pleaded that the peoples of the world asked only for peace and that this was the most anxious week since August, 1914. Mr. Maxton and Colonel Gretton, diehards of the Left and Right, who ironically enough sat next to each other in the Commons, both agreed from their respective viewpoints that the visit of the Foreign Secretary and Lord Privy Seal to Berlin was so much waste of time. All through, Mr. Baldwin's feet were upon the dispatch box; his eyes were shut. He symbolised benevolent and tired neutrality.

CHAPTER 14

GRAND TOURS

SIMON and Eden were in Berlin by 24th March, and the conversations with the Führer took place on the following two days. Failure was writ large over the closing communiqué issued for the information of the world. Hitler in one of his more difficult moods had left the British ministers speechless with a series of direct and sweeping demands. He held out no hope of reconciliation.

Hitler acted through his nerves rather than his brain, and Simon at once got on his nerves. Eden held little more than a watching brief, but what he saw must have convinced him that compromise and good faith flew out of Berlin when Hitler knocked at the door and received admittance. They met two Führers, the one blustering, speaking to his guests in his harsh guttural voice as though to a meeting of a million Nazis, the other after supper silently sobbing to the strains of the *Moonlight Sonata* as rendered in a dimly lit drawing room, by the incomparable Backhaus.

Eden sat awkwardly tapping his knee during both of these manifestations. Simon came straight home, and on 28th March was forced to admit in Parliament that "all the topics mentioned in the London communiqué of 3rd February had been brought under discussion" and that "considerable divergence of opinion between the two Governments was revealed by the conversations." Hitler had refused the Eastern Locarno with its multilateral guarantees, was not prepared to have anything to do with Moscow. He could not contemplate Lithuania in any non-aggression pact. His armament demands were what the experts had guessed they would be after the conscription decree. The only definitions that he saw as having any hope

for the future were his acceptance of air parity with France and Germany, and his contentment with a 35 to a 100 ratio with the British Navy. He then staggered the Ministries by blandly advising that air parity with Britain had already been achieved by Germany. It was decided that if it was logical for Sir John to return at once and let the Cabinet know the worst, it was equally logical for Anthony Eden to go deeper into this turbulent Europe.

Thus it fell to the lot of Eden to undertake his first major voyage of diplomatic discovery between the wars. On the evening of 26th March he left Berlin in a special eastward bound train and by the evening of the following day had crossed the frontiers of the Soviet Union. He was accompanied by M. Maisky, the astute ambassador to the Court of St. James, and arrived with him in Moscow on the 28th in time for a conversation that afternoon with Litvinov and for a reception in his honour the same evening.

The atmosphere of these Moscow conversations has been portrayed by Douglas Reed in his study of Europe's neurosis, *Insanity Fair*. Reed's position in his capacity as journalist was as much exploratory as Eden's was at the political level. For Reed was the first *Times* representative to get nearer to Red Russia on his paper's authority than Riga; while as for Eden no Conservative politician since the Revolution had got nearer to Moscow than Geneva. History was made on the evening of the 28th March, 1935, when Maxim Litvinov, the Bolshevik, proposed the toast of His Britannic Majesty King George V, and Anthony Eden, of Eton and Christ Church, replied by raising his glass to Lenin of immortal memory. Litvinov led off with a quotation from Sir Austen Chamberlain to the effect that friendship between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain was essential for the preservation of peace and he invoked the plan for the Western Air Pact.

Eden's reply was cordial and confident. With the usual reservation that the visit was exploratory and not executive, he affirmed that British policy was based on the League, that the

essence of the League was its universal influence and that accordingly Russia's adherence to it was a great gain to the League. Peace was everyone's objective. The next day Anthony Eden was taken into the recesses of the Kremlin to meet Joseph Stalin. There were present in addition to Stalin and Eden, Kresinsky, Maisky, Molotov and Litvinov, who acted as interpreter, Lord Chilston, British Ambassador in Moscow, and Strang of the Foreign Office, who took down what was said during the whole of Eden's tour in what is reputed to be the fastest of all longhands. The papers noted that the visitors were deeply impressed by Stalin's knowledge of world affairs.

The same evening *The Times* describes how a scene "inconceivable not long ago was witnessed at the Moscow Grand Opera . . . when the Lord Privy Seal of Great Britain was applauded long and warmly by an entirely proletarian audience which clapped enthusiastically as *God Save the King* was played. Then followed the *Internationale*." Eden, Chilston, members of the British Embassy staff, the Litvinovs and Maisky were among a big party that sat in front of the former Imperial box, "while the proletarian audience intently watched a superb production of the ballet *Le Lac des Cygnes*."

The key sentence in the long communiqué issued at the end of Eden's visit was that "there is at present no conflict of interest between the British and Soviet Governments on any one of the main issues of international policy." When Eden arrived he found the traditional hatred lending itself to the belief that England was the origin of every threat to Russian frontiers; but according to the *Survey of International Affairs*, perhaps the most important result of his visit "was to diminish, if not completely to dissipate those suspicions of British aims." In simpler terms it was as Reed puts it, "Russia does not want anything England has, Germany does."

Reed's last impression of the visit is Moscow station, "where the drab and silent crowds had gathered again. The Union Jack and Soviet banners remained affectionately linked. We all shook hands and boarded the train. Litvinov took leave of Eden

with the words, 'I wish you all success, for your success will be our success now!' "

The Grand Tour continued. On the evening of 1st April Eden was in Warsaw—not only the geographical but also the political Clapham Junction of Europe—and he stayed there until the evening of the 3rd. He met the aged and dying Pilsudski, who had hacked the new Poland into shape out of the chaotic ruin of the war, and the Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck, on whom were to fall major decisions of peace and war four years later. When Eden got to Warsaw he found the diplomatic atmosphere chilly. Splendid receptions, photographs of our handsome minister with the glamorous Madame Beck, did not make up for a noticeable absence of positive results.

At Prague, Eden had a more encouraging encounter. Here was another father of his people in President Masaryk, and another dominant controller of foreign affairs in Dr. Beneš. Geography made clearer demands upon them, and Beneš was genuine in his hopes that more would be heard of the Eastern Locarno at the forthcoming Stresa Conference. For at Stresa Eden's experiences were to be collated and the Allied Powers to work out the policy that would convey to Hitler the urgent need for peace. No doubt Beneš, as he waved goodbye to his guests from the aerodrome, was also genuine in his hope that Eden would be the British delegate when the time came for the statesmen to gather in secret yet grandiose conclave on the tiny island Isola Bella.

But the aeroplane with Eden on board shortly after leaving Leipzig for Cologne ran into a storm of tropical violence over the Black Mountains. According to Reed, who was also on board, it was "a foul trip, the worst I ever made. . . . We flew into thick cloud and then suddenly snow was beating about us, and the machine was thrown here and there and let down with a bump into a deep void and then again rocketed upwards and given a smack on one wing and a smack on the other, and a bang on the solar plexus and a kidney punch that sent the tail spinning round. I knew," he adds, "that we were flying over

wooded and mountainous country with no hope of a forced landing." When they landed at Cologne the flight had to be abandoned, but by then Eden, already exhausted by the rush from capital to capital, the endless dispatches and receptions, had broken down, was ill and ordered by his doctors to take a complete rest from world politics for several weeks.

So Stresa was deprived of the one man who could have given its deliberations perspective. Without Eden at Stresa, the senior statesmen of France and Great Britain, presided over by Mussolini, lapsed into the old negations, and Eden's visits were material only for Eden's autobiography. Undoubtedly he had gathered together unique personal experience. At thirty-seven he was the most travelled member of the British Government. He had met more European leaders than the whole Cabinet lumped together. He has always been reserved over his tours. One friend recalls visiting him at his nursing-home and advising him to keep a record of his impressions which he said would be far more interesting to posterity than the failure or success of fleeting policies. Eden agreed, and added apparently that he had formed no high opinion of Stalin. "He offered me a cigarette," said Eden, "with the same sort of smile as he would employ in sending a man to his execution!"

The Conference settled nothing. There was a general impression that Messrs. Mussolini, Flandin, Laval, MacDonald and Simon could not have spent so many hours in guarded discussions unless there was something more to it all than the mere communiqué. It was noted that among the Foreign Office staff in attendance was an expert on Abyssinian affairs.

When Simon returned he was at once questioned in Parliament, and did his best to silence criticism with a sprightly half-truth. "The Italo-Ethiopian dispute was never on the agenda of the Stresa Conference, and the subject was not discussed there," was his reply. The next day Eden tried to clear up the confusion caused by this categorical assertion. Reports were current that Mussolini had been willing to raise the whole question of Abyssinia and the Parliamentary Opposition was

able to make much of the point that, if the British delegates deliberately refrained from mentioning it, Mussolini might well have grounds for believing that we were in the circumstances condoning his aggression by our silence.

On 31st May came one of the first signs that Eden's active internationalism was marking him out for the special invective of the dictatorial Press. The *Tevere*, the most Anglophobe of all Mussolini's papers, began to make offensive references to Eden's dress sense and to identify him as the special enemy of Italy. It was roused to anger by the rumours of British hostility to an Italian adventure in Abyssinia. "This," commented *The Times* correspondent in Rome, "is the first really serious divergence in policy between Britain and Italy since Italy became a united kingdom." The *Tevere* was the paper which, during the height of the Abyssinian crisis, picked out one of the militant full-page advertisements of the British Israelites as a typical example of Fleet Street's editorial opinion. Eden himself was soon to be subjected to criticisms of the same apocryphal character. The British Embassy was soon making a regular trek to protest to the relevant Italian officials, and receiving equally regular promises that the matters raised would be duly examined.

It was clear that by now Italy was well set on winning back German friendship. However much the two Dictators may have disliked each other after their first disastrous meeting at Venice, they had been able sufficiently to set aside personal prejudice in order to produce a paper plan allowing both Italy and Germany spheres of interest that would not clash.

Whitehall with almost desperate determination set its official mind to breaking the axis before the steel hardened. So we rushed to Stresa in order to denounce and consider Germany's unilateral repudiation of treaties. Then we hurried back from Stresa to enter into the Anglo-German naval agreement—itsself as gross a violation of the spirit if not the letter of our pledged word as any since the war.

If the realism of this move pleased the permanent officials,

it certainly did not commend itself to the great mass of the electorate, and it finally undermined Simon's position as interpreter of the honesty of Britain's intentions, and put him at the head of those on the list for Cabinet transfer.

Two of Simon's final and characteristic acts as Foreign Secretary were to send Anthony Eden to explain away the Anglo-German naval treaty to France, and to compensate Mussolini in East Africa. Naturally enough Eden was not well received either in Paris or Rome. That he was able to put up a show at all argues much for the elasticity of his conversational technique. For on this occasion not only did Eden have to suffer Laval's peasant irony but also Mussolini's theatrical wrath. It was one of the unhappiest moments of his diplomatic career. He was taking to Rome considerable concessions. Abyssinia was to cede to Italy a portion of the Ogaden and to receive from Great Britain an outlet to the sea at Zeila, in British Somaliland, together with a corridor, fifty miles long, linking the port to the Abyssinian hinterland. All Great Britain was asking, if these terms were acceptable, was the retention of certain specified grazing rights. Ogaden was the literal *casus belli*. It was reasonable to expect that Mussolini might be prepared to negotiate. He was not.

Between the 24th and 26th June, Eden had seen the Duce for the last time, and it was a brusque farewell. The terms were rejected out of hand. Eden, without in any way competing with his father's temper, did not allow Mussolini to have a monopoly over wrath. When questioned as to what the British Government's reactions would be to a comprehensive military campaign by Italy, he is reported to have said that in that case the Suez would be no longer available for Italian troopships. An imaginative journalist has caught the atmosphere in which the interview was held by attributing to Eden the remark immediately afterwards that "he treated me as though I had stolen something!" Mussolini went on with his scorching oratory. At Cagliari it was, "We have old and new accounts to settle—we will settle them." At Sassari he denounced foreign public

opinion as a "ridiculous puppet that would be burnt up by the zeal of the Blackshirts," and as soon as Eden had gone, at Eboli he spoke of "the revolutionary people of Italy" who had "irrevocably decided" to carry the struggle to its conclusion.

It was to the rumbling of Italian thunder that the long expected Cabinet reshuffle took place. MacDonald, weary and ineffective, made way for Baldwin as Prime Minister. Baldwin thereupon removed Simon from the storm-centre to the comparative security of the Home Office, and appointed Sir Samuel Hoare to take his place. At the same time Anthony Eden, whom many felt to have staked the higher claim for the Foreign Secretaryship, was promoted to the Cabinet without portfolio; but in response to Baldwin's double thinking and shrewd electoral sense he was to be nicknamed "Minister for League of Nations Affairs." Nobody questioned this decision; the only criticism was that Eden was not adequately rewarded.

At what, for British Conservatism, was the absurd and childish age of thirty-seven, Anthony Eden was a Cabinet Minister with a status that had no precedent and opportunities that were boundless. In some ways his promotion had outstripped his personal achievement. He filled a need, he was available.

He was becoming the symbol and embodiment of aspirations not always clearly expressed or understood, of the anxious millions in the world between the wars. A *Spectator* profile of him published a week before the reshuffle made this point by saying, "In these last three years when with each month the international situation has worsened and the prospects of disarmament have become increasingly remote, and Europe is once again as it was in 1914, an armed camp, one man has stood out with courage and consistency for the translation of ideals of the post-war peace system into realities. . . . At thirty-seven he has won a position for himself abroad and in his own country that no man of comparable age has achieved in our time."

Eden's promotion to the Cabinet, then, occasioned no sur-

prise while the complexity of the international situation suggested the need for some special reinforcement of the Foreign Office. That Sir Samuel Hoare and Eden should be called upon to exercise what almost amounted to parallel authority over our foreign policy gave widespread satisfaction. There might be loose ends in the arrangement; but the personal qualities of the two men, it was felt, would overcome all technical difficulties and objections.

On 7th June, Hoare made his first speech as Foreign Secretary. It was a calm and well-arranged effort, which gave full credit to Italy's need for expansion, but it met with no response from Rome. There is an important footnote in the *Survey* which draws attention to the date of this speech, and suggests that "it should be borne in mind, with reference to the sequel, by any student of international affairs who is concerned to take a just view of persons as well as a balanced view of events." This impartial commentary asserts that, if Sir Samuel Hoare had cared to make his own apologia at the expense of a colleague, he might have argued with considerable force that the diplomatic battle had already been lost for him before he was asked by Mr. Baldwin to do his best to win it.* The same consideration applied with equal force to Eden but by the end of May Eden had been successful in working out the Council Resolutions which had led Mussolini to accept the semblance of arbitration and in doing so to convert the Abyssinian dispute into an avowed international question. This was a real achievement.

But sniping from various quarters persisted. There were warnings of the dangers of amateur diplomacy from Parliament and lack of will from the Press. Perhaps the most effective sortie against the Government was by Churchill on the dangers of diarchy. Were Eden and Hoare really in double harness, or were they spokesmen of rival and incompatible aims? The Anglo-German Naval Pact which had been cited in the argument was not in its essentials either anti-Stresa or anti-League,

* *Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol. II. Page 161.*

was Eden's thesis. As for the visit to Mussolini: "Nothing was further from the mind of the Government than to go behind the backs of anyone." According to *The Times*, "this speech had a great success."

It was, however, through the League of Nations Union that there was the greatest impact with public opinion. During the spring Lord Cecil had been organising his monumental Peace Ballot. It was an all-embracing questionnaire. It asked for "Yes" and "No" answers to questions demanding three-hour essays in reply; but the response was overwhelming; the organisation it entailed and the voluntary help it received made it the greatest probe into public opinion hitherto attempted. It preceded opinion survey by sample.

The sponsors of the Peace Ballot were very soon to find their own Sir Galahad in Anthony Eden, but at no stage during its national campaigning did he give it the slightest encouragement. Indeed, there are strong grounds for believing that he shared the view of *The Times*, and until a very late stage in the proceedings was actively hostile to it. Perhaps he disliked it for its attempt to over-simplify what he, above all men, knew to be a complex issue, and thus for leading the British electorate into a facile optimism contrary to its own shrewd and cautious instincts. Whatever motives may have been in Eden's mind, beyond receiving Cecil and his collaborators in company with Baldwin and Hoare, and at Hoare's express request, he played no part in the general rejoicings, and was given a hero-lead he never sought.

CHAPTER 15

ABYSSINIA—TEST CASE

BY THE end of July the arbitrators in the Abyssinian dispute had made no appreciable headway. Abyssinia claimed that it was the Council's duty to unravel the knots at its forthcoming meeting. Italy made reservations which were duly accepted, and the Italian representative, Aloisi, duly took his place at the Council table. There followed three days of protracted and difficult negotiation, in which Laval and Eden, working closely together, were the dominating personalities. Their work ended in a compromise embodied in a couple of League resolutions and a Three-Power declaration.

On 4th August, Eden broadcast from Geneva on the decision of Great Britain, France and Italy to negotiate direct over the Abyssinian question. The League, he declared, may not prevent all wars, but it gives arbitration a good chance. The dispute, he added, must be settled by 4th September or the consequences would be serious. The Italian Press at once attacked this speech, and inferred from it the threat of sanctions.

The Three-Power Conference convened in Paris on 15th August. Eden arrived on the 13th for talks with Laval and the Abyssinian representative, Teclé Hawariate. When Aloisi arrived he had no instructions to formulate his demand nor would he give any guarantees. Eden and Laval accordingly decided there was nothing for it but for Great Britain and France to produce a plan which Rome could either or reject. This plan was at once sent to Rome. Mussolini's reply arrived on the 18th, and was in effect a definite refusal even to discuss the suggestions put forward for consideration. A communiqué was issued, and the Conference indefinitely adjourned. With the summary breakdown of the Paris Conference went the last

hope of a peaceful settlement of the Italo-Abyssinian dispute.

What was the policy of Great Britain and France on and after 4th September? During this crucial fortnight no lead was given either in Paris or London. There was a Cabinet meeting in Downing Street on 22nd August, but the hopes raised by the news that the Prime Minister regarded the situation as sufficiently serious to interrupt his colleagues' holiday were disappointed by the negative results of their deliberations. We were prepared to do what everyone else was prepared to do; it was in fact for Estonia and Ecuador to tell us rather than us to tell Estonia and Ecuador. Collective security had always roused the British Government to the chivalry of "After you." Hoare warned us all against rashness. "It was easy," he had said on the 1st August, and "perhaps tempting to jump into the arena impetuously, throw down the glove and challenge anyone who disagreed to fight. Supposing, however, that that attitude would destroy for years the basis of international co-operation; supposing the result of that action would cripple the League for a generation to come."

The result was that Eden set out for Paris prior to the fateful meeting of the Council on 4th September with no instructions and little scope for initiative in so far as he was representative of a Government that had simply come to no considered conclusion on the next move. *The Times* had a first leader, "Mr. Eden Sets Out," and described how his mission was regarded as one requiring "tact, courage and persistence," but as not being too difficult for his undoubted skill. Hoare was also suitably praised. On the 3rd, Eden dined with Baldwin at Aix—never before had Baldwin been so near to a major European dispute.

The Italo-Ethiopian dispute was first on the agenda, and Eden began the proceedings with his promised report on the breakdown of the Paris talks. "It was a dramatic scene. . . . Mr. Eden talked cheerfully with M. Litvinov." Then "Mr. Eden began his report, reading quietly and gravely before a hushed



Kemsley Picture Service

SIR ANTHONY EDEN



LEAGUE DIPLOMATS. October, 1933: Edén and Simon arrive at Croydon from League of Nations meetings at Geneva.

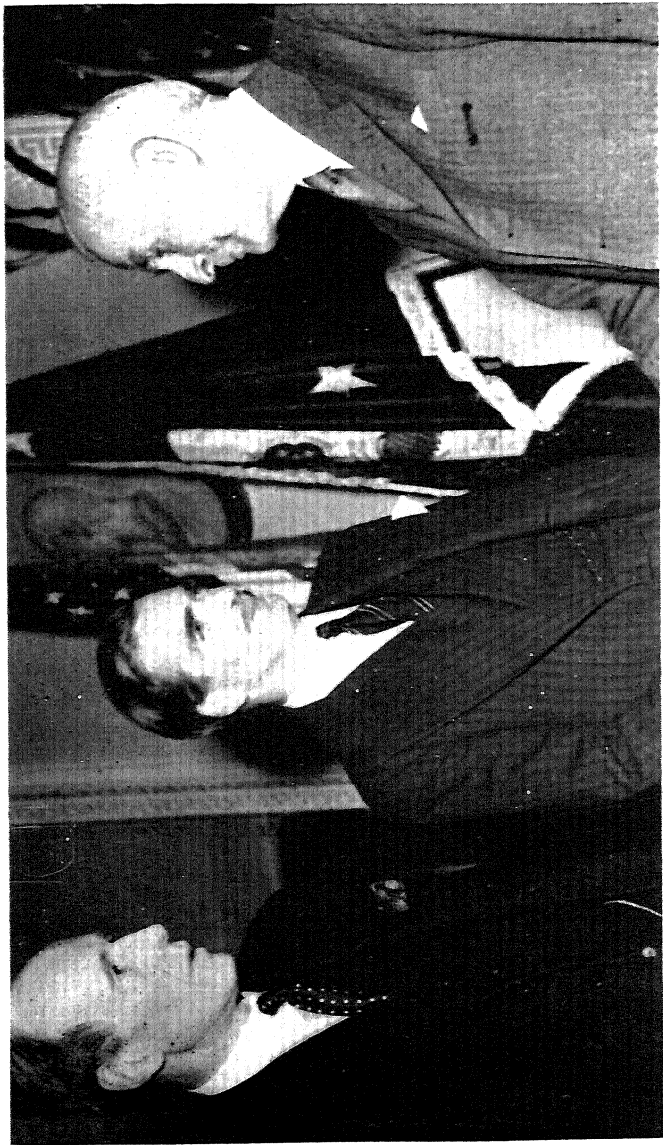


DIVIDED COUNSELLORS. 29th September, 1937: Eden and Neville Chamberlain in anxious conversation after attending a Cabinet meeting.



Wide World Photo

GRAND ALLY. 10th January, 1941: Eden greets Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's personal representative, on arrival at the Foreign Office during his first wartime visit to London for talks which were to culminate in the Atlantic Charter.



TRANSATLANTIC CONFERENCE. 15th March, 1943: Eden accompanied by Lord Halifax, British Ambassador, is greeted by Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, on arrival at the State Department in Washington for the first of a series of meetings in which Allied grand strategy was reviewed with President Roosevelt and the American Government.

Wide World Photo



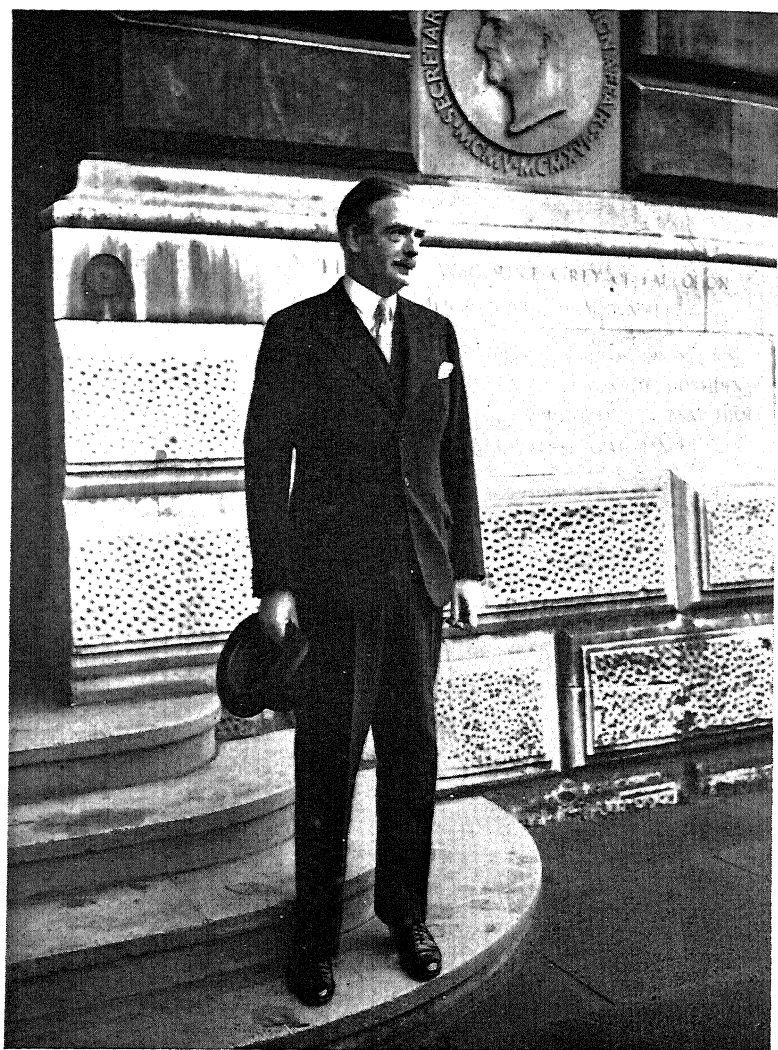
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LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION. 6th May, 1948: Churchill and Eden leaving Northolt to attend a session of the Council of Europe at the Hague.



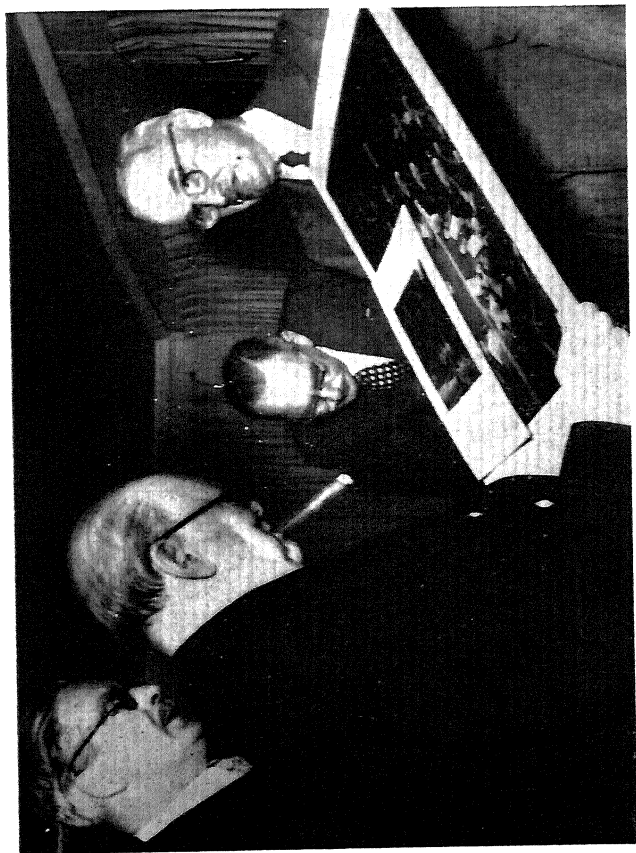
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EDEN AND SON. October, 1951: On the occasion of Nicholas Eden's twentieth birthday.



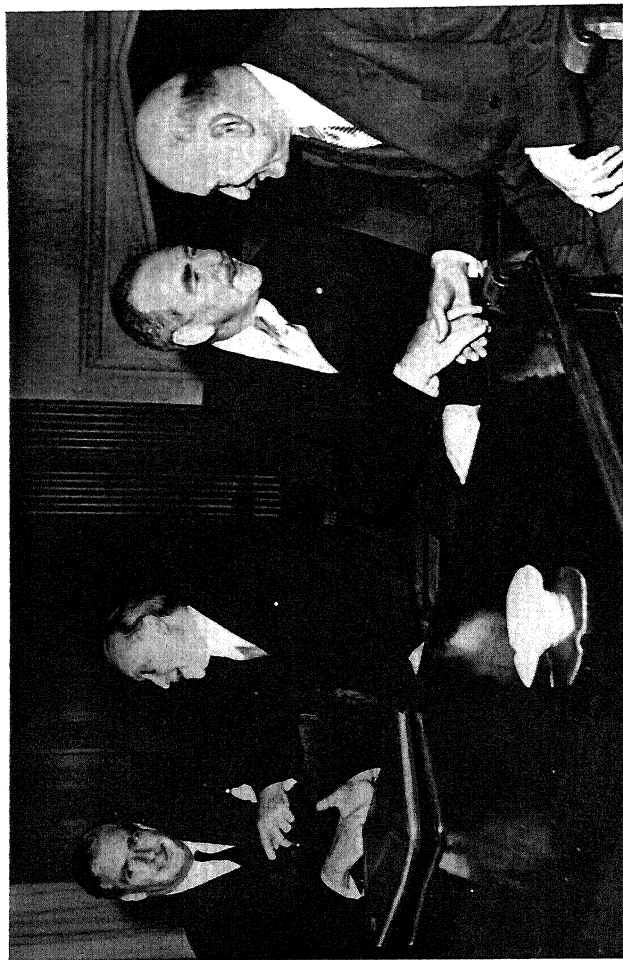
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FOREIGN SECRETARY AGAIN. 29th October, 1951: For the first time in over five years Eden reports for duty at the Foreign Office on the Conservatives' return to power after the 1951 General Election. In the background is the plaque in honor of an illustrious predecessor, Earl Grey of Falloden.



Wide World Photo

MEMORIES OF POTSDAM. 5th January, 1952: Eden and Churchill look at colour pictures of the Potsdam Conference shown to them by President Truman during their visit to Washington for consultations with the American Government shortly after the formation of the Conservative Government. In the background is Secretary of State Dean Acheson.



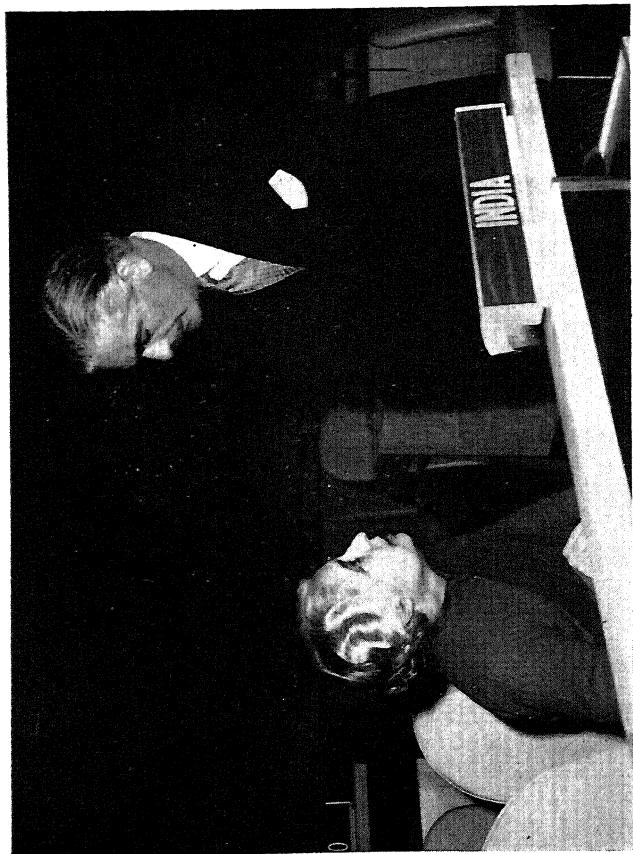
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BONN ACCORD. 26th May, 1952: *Left to right*: Eden; the West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer; Dean Acheson; and the French Foreign Minister, Schuman, greet each other prior to the signing of the contractual agreement granting extensive sovereign rights to Western Germany and ending Allied occupation of the Federal Republic.



Mirrorpic London

WEDDING GROUP. 14th August, 1952: Eden's second marriage, to Clarissa Churchill, the Prime Minister's niece, touched the popular imagination, and large crowds gathered to greet bride and bridegroom for the wedding ceremony at Caxton Hall. Afterwards, this picture of them with the Churchills was taken in the garden of 10 Downing Street.



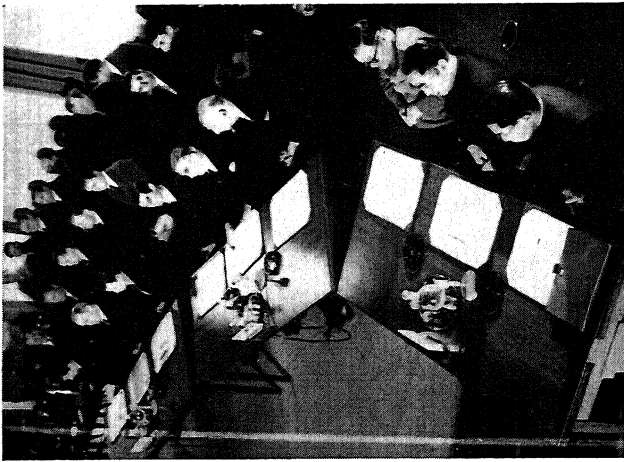
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UNITED NATIONS. 11th November, 1952: Eden with Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Prime Minister, on the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly session in New York. Madame Pandit, after leading the Indian delegation, subsequently became President of the Assembly.



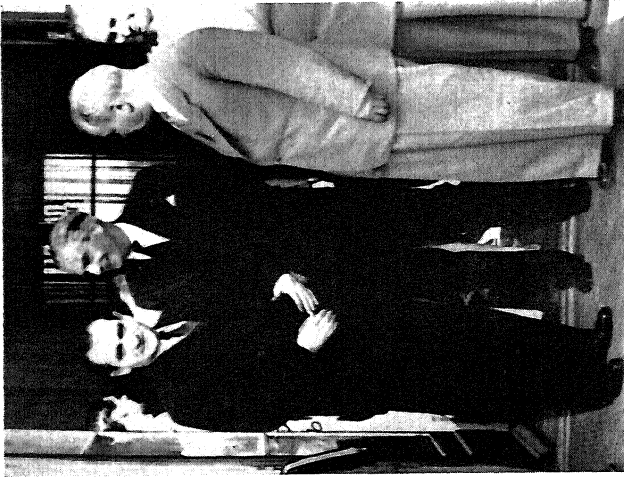
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WORLD REVIEW, 1954: Churchill and Eden greeted by President Eisenhower and Mrs. Eisenhower at the White House. The meeting took place during a difficult phase in Anglo-American relations arising from the crisis in French Indo-China and growing disunity in Europe. As a result of it the two countries' unity of purpose was reaffirmed.

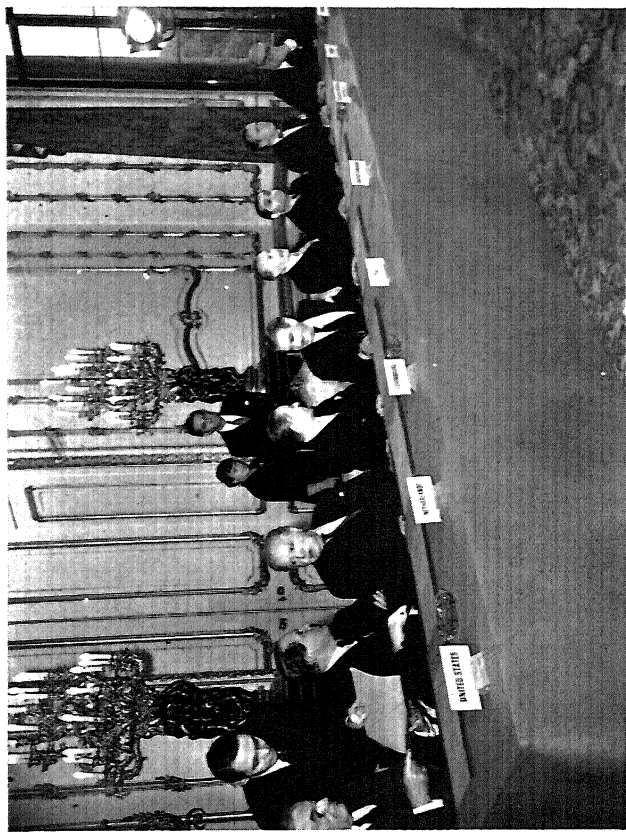


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GENEVA CONFERENCE. May-June, 1954: *Left*, the Russian, British and Chinese delegations led by Molotov, Eden and Chou En-lai assembled at the opening day of the conference in Geneva on French Indo-China. The French Prime Minister, Mendès-France, set himself a time limit within which a settlement should be reached or he would resign. He is seen, *right*, with Eden and Molotov on the eve of agreement which was reached only at the last moment after intensive diplomatic effort on Eden's part.



United Press Photo



The Times London

LONDON AGREEMENT, 3rd October, 1954: Delegates to the historic Nine-Power Conference on European defence assembled at Lancaster House for the signing of the final protocol. *Left to right*: John Foster Dulles (United States, about to sign), Beyen (Netherlands), Bech (Luxembourg), Martino (Italy), Eden, Adenauer (Germany), Mendès-France (France), Lester Pearson (Canada) and Spaak (Belgium).



Kemsley Picture Service

THE PRIME MINISTER. 6th April, 1955: Sir Anthony and Lady Eden leaving their London residence at Carlton Gardens on the day of his appointment to the Premiership.

and crowded audience.”* He spoke in cold precise terms. M. Laval followed, putting rather more emphasis on conciliation than the Covenant. Aloisi was next, and presented the Council with a host of new grievances, including the quality of the régime in Addis Ababa. Eden’s appeal to Italy to use League machinery to settle the dispute was brushed aside. The French advocate, M. Jèze, who most ably represented Abyssinia at Geneva, followed. “It was,” he declared, “a dangerous precedent for the League to admit the criticisms of state members about their respective internal régimes. Italy was shifting her ground because the Walwal incident no longer served her purposes: the issue was whether in the next few days a war of extermination would be opened.”

The next day, when M. Jèze was continuing his summary of the Ethiopian case and denouncing the Italian Memorandum with the assertion that “the Italian Government, having resolved to conquer and destroy Ethiopia, begins by giving Ethiopia a bad name,” Aloisi rose and left the Council room, and was followed by the second Italian delegate. Jèze at once asked for prompt action under Articles XV and X of the Covenant. This dramatic scene took place in the evening, as the Council did not meet until 7:00 P.M. During the day Eden and the other delegates had been fully occupied in private discussion. Eden gave a lunch at which his principal guest was Colonel Beck, and Aloisi had already blandly told the Press that Italy “put Abyssinia beyond the law.”

After intense negotiation a committee of five members was set up to make a general examination and seek a peaceful solution of the dispute. Madariaga was made chairman. The committee held eleven meetings between the 7th and 24th September, and by the 18th had evolved its scheme, but there were developments actually while the committee was sitting which virtually rendered decisions out of date before they had been reached. On 8th September, Count Ciano (Mussolini’s son-in-law), Minister for Press and Propaganda, serving with the

* From *The Times*, 5th September, 1935.

Italian Air Force in Africa, declared in an address to the American people that Italy had decided to consider as closed for ever the period of attempts at pacific collaboration with Ethiopia. The next day Hitler greeted the newly-appointed Italian Ambassador in Berlin, and exchanged addresses which pointedly talked of community of interest between Germany and Italy.

Then on 10th September came Mussolini's famous mass mobilisation order, when there was to be a one-day "general assembly of the forces of the régime." Church bells were to be rung, sirens hooted, and drums rolled. It was against this atmosphere of menace and bluster and on the self-same day that M. Laval and Sir Samuel Hoare had a private conversation in Geneva. "At the time," comments *The Survey*, "the Laval-Hoare consultations of 10th September attracted little public attention, since their purport was not divulged and no hint was given of their actual importance; whereas the imagination of the public was caught and captivated by Sir Samuel Hoare's immediately following pronouncement with its apparent promise of wholehearted loyalty to the League Covenant on the British Government's part."

Not until 28th December did Laval divulge what took place on 10th September. Then, speaking in the Chamber of Deputies, he revealed: "I had some conversations at Geneva with Sir Samuel Hoare and Mr. Eden. Conversations about what? . . . We found ourselves instantaneously in agreement upon ruling out military sanctions, not adopting any measure of naval blockade, never contemplating the closure of the Suez Canal—in a word, ruling out everything that might lead to war." Actually this assertion is not wholly accurate, in as far as Sir Samuel Hoare did not commit himself to sanctions nor to the avoidance of sanctions. He kept his hands free; but as *The Survey* justly adds, "From the practical point of view, it makes little difference whether the owner of a hand which has done no handiwork has allowed a neighbour to tie the passively

offending member behind his back, or has himself kept it voluntarily in his pocket."

Laval's statement, therefore, is in substance accurate; for Anglo-French policy was laid down on 10th September "in free discussion on an equal footing," and was followed by Flandin after Laval, and by Eden after Hoare "until the bitter end of an unchecked war of aggression which reached its military termination seven months after the opening of hostilities, in a complete military victory for the aggressor over his victim." Eden was present, and Eden consented to these decisions.

Sir Samuel Hoare's speech on 11th September thrilled the world. "The League stands," he said, rapping the desk in front of him like a schoolmaster, "and my country stands with it for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression."

During the month following this speech, which by its double emphasis on collective action begged the very questions it raised, Eden was busily engaged on committee and with the endless round of lobby negotiation. But events once again were moving too fast for him. On 2nd October, the eve of the Italian invasion, Mussolini spoke to the assembled millions of his people: "Make the shout of your decision fill the heavens and gladden the hearts of the soldiers who are waiting in Africa." When the Hague Council met on 5th October, Eden had no illusions as to the issues at stake. In a letter to his constituents he wrote: "The issues of the dispute are such as must profoundly interest every one of us. It is not purely a question of colonial adventure of no real importance, as has been urged in some quarters. It is not a question of the imperialist demand of one Power or another Power in the territory of Abyssinia or elsewhere. It is not even just a question of peace or war in an outlying part of the world. The real issue is whether or not the League of Nations can prove itself an effective instrument in this dispute, and whether its members are prepared to respect

and uphold the Covenant. . . . The present dispute is a test case."

It was this succinct definition of the issue which no doubt was to put Eden beyond the pale with Conservative backwoodsmen, Empire Firsters, isolationists and Catholic intellectuals, and social patrons of the Londonderry and Cliveden vintage and which also rendered him suspect with the more timorous elders in the Cabinet, among whom must be included Simon and Chamberlain, whose support for the League at this time was wrapped round with every possible saving clause. The Committee of Six was appointed, and the Council adopted Eden's urgent resolution that this Committee should "get to work almost at once tonight." Its finding was ready within ten days, and it was simply that, "After an examination of the facts stated above, the Committee has come to the conclusion that the Italian Government has resorted to war in disregard of its Covenants under Article XII of the Covenant of the League of Nations."

On 9th October the Assembly met again, and Beneš (the President) made a long statement on procedure, envisaging the application of Article XVI, the Sanctions article. The two following days were devoted to a series of full-dress speeches. Interests ranging from those of France to those of Haiti were duly invoked. Eden called for action in the name of humanity. "Since it is our duty to take action," he declared, "it is essential that such action should be prompt. That is the League's responsibility—a responsibility based on humanity: for we cannot forget that war is at this moment actually in progress."

The League proceeded under Beneš's guidance to unfold itself and on 11th September set up the Co-ordination Committee which, in its turn, set up a sub-committee better known as the Committee of Eighteen. Both these appointments took place on the 11th, and on the same evening Eden made a dramatic broadcast on sanctions, promising to go through with them, pointing out that the machinery for operating them was

ready within a week of the outbreak of war, and ending on a note of third party ethic: "We have no quarrel with Italy."

Senhor Vasconcellos of Portugal was elected chairman both of the Co-ordination Committee and the Committee of Eighteen. Eden was at once rescuing him and his colleagues from barren juridical wrangles, and putting before them the one issue which justified their corporate existence. He proposed that the committee should forthwith recommend that the arms embargo (which had already virtually ensured Abyssinia's overthrow) against Abyssinia should be raised and a ban on arms to Italy be imposed. He urged that the list of arms should be based on a list compiled by the United States. The next day he proposed, under the heading of economic measures, a refusal to take imports from Italy. He submitted that "an embargo by all members of the League on Italian goods would cut off roughly seventy per cent of Italy's export trade."

The next resolution he carried was that "the Governments are invited to put in operation at once such of the measures recommended as can be enforced without fresh legislation, and to take all practical steps to secure that the measures recommended are put into operation by 31st October, 1935. Within ten days of the Assembly's concurrence with the findings of the League Council, a committee consisting of fifty-two states, members of the League, had adopted for recommendation to all the governments—with the exception of the two belligerents and three dissenters—five concrete proposals which if put into effect would mean that the obligations under Article XVI would have been largely brought into effect. "Notwithstanding its incompleteness" says *The Survey*, "this was a remarkable international achievement."

Eden was during this brief hour the hero of the nation. There was a feeling in the five continents that Great Britain had produced a leader who was on more than nodding acquaintance with international action. As a symbol of gratitude for great services rendered to the State and to the world the Leamington

Council decided to present him with the freedom of the borough. It was generally believed that he would not be opposed in the general election which was imminent and which had been largely provoked by the magnitude of his personal triumphs following Sir Samuel Hoare's speech.

On 16th October, Viscount Snowden, in a fierce attack on the Government at a National Liberal Club luncheon, made a significant exception. "I think it is only fair," added this master of invective, "to pay a warm personal tribute to Mr. Eden, who in extremely difficult circumstances has shown great courage and more than ordinary capacity. He has been hampered by the lack of cordial support from his colleagues, especially when dealing with a reluctant French Premier, and the country is really indebted to him for his conduct of affairs thus far." A few days later the Egyptian Nile Society added its quota of tribute to Mr. Eden's great struggle against the aggressor.

Then on 28th October, Eden received the Freedom of Leamington—a fitting climax to twelve years' unbroken membership and unstinted service to his constituency. He used the occasion for one of his most eloquent and impressive speeches. It was an appeal to youth and to new ideas. "It is fashionable," he said, "for politicians to look forward to retirement—to pigs, poultry, and a pot of ale by the hearthside. I promise to allow myself no such indulgence. . . . I am convinced that we are all moving into an era when nations will strive to understand one another." On the same night he was speaking in Coventry on foreign policy. There were 25,000 applications for the three thousand seats at this meeting. His thesis was that the League had worked as a body—it had created its own momentum—it had not been forced into action by Great Britain. The impressive thing was the virtual unanimity over Sanctions.

The Labour Party had the temerity to put up a candidate against Eden at Leamington, adopting a blind member of the Birmingham City Council. It was duly stressed, however, the next day, when Eden was adopted, that the nomination papers showed him to be in receipt of "influential Liberal support."

His election campaign was little less than a triumphal progress. Stafford Cripps, by offensive references to "Jubilee ballyhoo," and sinister injunctions as to the necessity for economic crisis to herald the socialist millenium, succeeded in supplying the National Government with all the propaganda it needed. Eden spoke of the disastrous consequences of returning a Socialist party "containing men like Sir Stafford Cripps." On the one hand he stressed his belief—as always, based on personal experience—that the League would emerge from the crisis stronger than before, and on the other that there was no security in piling up armaments.

The election passed off very quietly. Baldwin's solidity gained the day. The plea of strength without armaments, peace with honour, was apparently irresistible. The National-Conservative majority was reduced, but was still invincible. There had been no Opposition cry beyond the Cassandra warning that the right policy was being pursued by the wrong men. Low caught the Opposition dilemma in his cartoon of Baldwin crossing the Rubicon. "What is the disposition of the enemy?" asks Baldwin. "Sire," replies a member of his general staff, "the enemy is all on our side."

The new Government, with roughly the same personnel, was immediately at pains to give the lie to these admittedly timid suspicions. On 11th November the Italian Government had sent a note to the British Government protesting against the gross unfairness of imposing sanctions against Italy. On 22nd November we replied, in tones of self-conscious moral grandeur, that we could not discuss the specific questions raised in the Italian note, pointing out that as we had signed the Covenant we had to accept the consequences.

But the next stage in the Committee of Eighteen's deliberations was the decisive oil sanction, and here came the first signs that the dualism involved in upholding conciliation and the Covenant was weakening our resolve. Laval had asked for a postponement, which according to Hoare made possible a further intensive effort to bring about a peaceful settlement. At the

end of November, Mr. Peterson, the Foreign Office expert on Abyssinia, was sent over to Paris, not to discuss oil but to find the formula that would be acceptable at once to the League, Abyssinia and Italy. After about a fortnight the experts had reached deadlock.

It was then that Sir Samuel Hoare, passing through Paris on his way to Switzerland for a holiday on doctor's orders, was inveigled into a series of conversations with Laval which culminated in the notorious and ill-fated Hoare-Laval Peace Plan. It is only fair to Sir Samuel to point out that he had on more than one occasion hinted that the door was being left open for some such project. The British and French Press assiduously betrayed confidences, and there was somewhere in the French Foreign Office a persistent leakage.

It was more than Hoare's crime—it was Baldwin's blunder. The political inertia and mental confusion of the Prime Minister during this crisis were shocking to behold. There is a legend that the Hoare-Laval Plan arrived on Baldwin's breakfast table written out in French, which at once led him to the comfortable estimate that it had Sam's approval, and that there was no need for him to wade through it as well. There is poetic licence in this story, but poetic insight as well. The whole tenor of Baldwin's behaviour suggests that he had not fully acquainted himself with the implications of Laval's attitude to Mussolini at this decisive moment in the Abyssinian conflict. But public opinion, which as a political force only emerges, it seems, in spasms of disgust or delight, was outraged, and demanded a scapegoat. The Government Whips were powerless, the Government press did not dare to say a word for it.

The electorate did not express itself by vociferous protest meetings, but everyone looked at everyone else, and raised an eyebrow which conveyed unanimously, "No!" It had voted to the slogan of a Strong Britain for a Strong League: in both respects this plan to partition Abyssinia by earnestly persuading the Emperor and by side-tracking Geneva was a repudiation of strength. The truth is that the preparations for the Plan

were defective and that the psychology of it was bad. It was an affront both to the ideals and to the self-esteem of the British people.

For Eden the dilemma must have been almost intolerable. He was the heir to a throne that had just been taken from under him. Fortunately for the British Government, Mussolini turned the plan down. If he had accepted it, even as a basis for negotiations, it is difficult to see how Baldwin could have survived the challenge. We were spared that indignity, and Baldwin did survive but with his prestige battered. Hoare's personal explanation was full of dignity. If the crisis had been without its special context, and the memory of his Geneva speech had not been so near to hand, he might well have ridden the storm. Baldwin's contribution to the debate was disastrous. The fate of the entire administration rested upon the status and reputation of Anthony Eden, the man who everybody now realised had played so large a part in winning the election, whose record was beyond reproach.

It was an embarrassing position to be a young hero without any scope for heroics. The very nature of his popularity was a danger. Already Eden had influential enemies who were doubly jealous that the prestige of Conservatism should be at the mercy of so radical a knight errant. Hoare would have to be brought back, and Eden would be working with two ex-Foreign Secretaries in the Cabinet, whose support he could not expect and whose example he had to avoid. One of the purveyors of inside information by newsletter discussing Eden's dilemma, referred to a story that he had threatened the Government with resignation on the news of the Plan, was then sent for by the King and that it was only after that interview that he decided to remain after all.

There is something of human drama in the young Minister, identified not only with the future of an administration but with all the brightest prospects for a new international order, travelling up to Sandringham on a bitter December night to meet the

dying King and to receive confirmation, blessing and perhaps decisive advice from the most experienced statesman of them all. So many had kissed hands, taken their seals of office from him; so many famous names, and causes won, lost or forgotten. Eden was to be the last of a great company to take office of state under King George V.

CHAPTER 16

WATCH ON THE RHINE

AT THE end of January, 1936, the nation was paying homage at the coffin of George V. London was full of potentates, and Eden was busy with informal negotiations. During these historic days Eden had talks with King Carol, still under the guidance of Titulescu; King Boris, Flandin, Neurath, van Zeeland, de Kanya of Hungary, and Starhemberg of Austria. For the most part the future of Germany was the principal item on the agenda, although officially it was given out that the conversations were "purely informative, and limited to a general exchange of views." It was also given out that Flandin expressed no urgent anxiety about the Rhineland, while Neurath was equally reassuring.

The stage was set for Eden's first statement as Foreign Secretary in the House of Commons in the debate to take place on 24th February. There were various lengthy forecasts of what he would say, but when the great day arrived he said very little.

"The much-heralded debate," *The Times* candidly reported, "proved somewhat disappointing." If the Opposition was too shrill and unpractical, Mr. Eden was too general and unexceptional for either side. He said nothing that thrilled his audience, and on the whole his speech was "of a kind which must be carefully digested before it can do much good." As the Government had no new pronouncement to make there was some surprise that they had chosen to encourage the debate. Although it was Eden's official debut, it is noted that he was only applauded with a "rather perfunctory cheer." The House was left to guess whether the Government policy was to intensify international action. Eden on the oil-sanction was non-committal. It would only be applied, he said, if it would help to

stop the war. The Government was waiting for the experts' report before deciding. In reviewing the international situation, Eden noted many discreditable similarities to 1914. Collective security was our only hope. Once again he stressed that this must not and did not mean encirclement.

On 2nd March, Eden, in Geneva, tried to clarify British policy by declaring formally that His Majesty's Government were prepared to apply the oil embargo if others would. Flandin and Laval were reduced to desperate expedients. On 3rd March Eden was agreeing to Flandin's proposal to give the combatants a week to stop hostilities. The League should get to work on the oil sanction immediately. A week sufficed to provide the pretext to shelve the embarrassing question. On 4th March Eden left Geneva. On the 5th he reported to the Cabinet, stating that he understood that Italy would meet the oil embargo by withdrawing from the League of Nations and from Locarno, and by denunciation of the Franco-Italian military agreement.

By Saturday, 7th March, Hitler's storm-troops had silently—almost timidly—crossed the bridges and re-taken the Rhineland. Here was a new and strategically far graver peril immediate and overwhelming. It was sprung upon the world, as with most of Hitler's coups, in direct contradiction to solemn, gratuitous and recent pledges. All Eden's laborious effort to make Abyssinia the "test case" that would impress the power politicians in Berlin was, it seemed, of no avail. The power politicians had not waited to be impressed. So contemptuous were they of armed democracy that, according to reliable English witnesses, the German infantry were not given a single cartridge nor the artillery a single shell. The aircraft had had machine-guns but no ammunition. This humiliating information was not officially available at the time.

The first impression was that Hitler had weighed up all the consequences and accepted the ultimate sanction of war. The coup was covered by one of Hitler's passionate lectures to the Reichstag, with all its accompaniment of hoarse yet controlled hysterics. Intimation of its full meaning was conveyed to Eden

at 11:00 A.M. by the courtly German Ambassador to London, von Hoesch. Eden's reply to von Hoesch's memorandum was that the British Government would be bound to take a most serious view.

How much in the dark France and Great Britain were as to the real trend of events can be seen from the fact that only the night before the coup a big military reception was being held at the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, with nearly all the military attachés unaware of the great decisions that were being taken all around them; while in London, Eden had been seeing von Hoesch at the Foreign Office to let him know that the British Government were anxious to conclude a Western air pact.* Confronted with the *fait accompli* Eden at once invoked the constitutional remedy of summoning the representatives of the other Locarno Powers. He then motored down to Chequers for consultation with Baldwin, whose effective belief in Eden was counteracted by his persistent reliance on MacDonald and Halifax, the free-lance Cabinet Ministers. These men did not differentiate, with Eden's clarity, Germany's grievance from the method of redressing it.

Sunday was an anxious day. Hitler, in his desire to beat the Press, was choosing week-ends for his biggest news stories. In doing so he made one miscalculation. He was violating one of the oldest of British institutions. The news that statesmen are meeting on a Sunday at once rouses the British people to the gravity of the situation. On this particular Sunday, Eden saw the French Ambassador twice, and was with Baldwin again, who had returned to London. By 9th March the psychological initiative had been lost. France and Britain kept up the eternal questions—asking each other what the other would do, the one unwilling to supply the other with the necessary lead.

The evening after King George's funeral, Baldwin had given a private dinner-party, at which Flandin and Eden were guests. Flandin had asked about the Rhineland, and Eden's reply was,

* At the moment when the Rhineland was being invaded Hitler was telling the Reichstag, "We have no territorial demands to make in Europe."

"What will the French Government do? Until we know that, we cannot usefully discuss the British attitude." Flandin had noted down for his Cabinet's agenda that a reply must be given to Mr. Eden. It was. Flandin had authority to tell the British Government that France was ready to act if Germany carried out her intentions. Eden was told of the statement at Geneva.

Once again a leakage at the Quai d'Orsay precipitated the crisis, for the Wilhelmstrasse knew all about Franco-British intentions in advance, and without authority. The Nazis were alarmed; they had banked on the bickerings of Paris and London over Abyssinia paralysing the *Entente* elsewhere. Eden's activity was dangerous. His paper schemes would have to be forestalled by action.

When the crisis came Flandin was ready to act. The Locarno signatories met, and Flandin, backed by Paul-Boncour and Léger, the powerful Permanent Under-Secretary at the Quai d'Orsay, urged that Hitler was not strong enough for this adventure. If the Locarno Powers would confirm Hitler's aggression, France would take care of the sanctions on their behalf. The delegates were impressed, but advised that in view of the gravity of the situation they would have to refer back to their respective Governments. France, in the meanwhile, could not afford to offend the expressed wish of her Locarno colleagues. Eden further took the occasion to tell Flandin in Paris that Locarno was not enough, that only the League Council had sufficient status to meet the crisis, and that in the interests of calm deliberation the Council should be taken from Geneva and brought over to London. To all these things Flandin agreed.

So it was that by Monday night Eden had succeeded in sterilising Saturday's Rhineland occupation. As far as Power politics, war and international action were concerned, he was relying on the League of Nations as on a safety-valve, an instrument to gain time and release pressure.

Eden prefaced his journey to Paris by a well-ordered state-

ment to an anxious House of Commons. He gave essential points of fact and policy. First, that common decisions were to be deferred until after the League Council's meeting on the following Friday, secondly, that German action had shaken the confidence of the nations in the trustworthiness of future German promises. Nevertheless, the German proposals were to be studied. A peace structure might be rebuilt on the ruins of peace. There was no reason to suppose that Germany meant hostilities; but, lastly, if she did, Britain would once again stand by France or Belgium. *The Times* called this an admirable statement.

On 12th March, the Council of the League of Nations took up its residence at St. James's Palace and the best London hotels. Anthony Eden, his prestige at the peak, presided over its proceedings and destinies. Eden proposed to the delegates that the German Government should, first, withdraw all but a symbolical number of troops from the zone; secondly, should not increase the number; and, thirdly, should undertake not to fortify the zone at least until the international situation had been regularised.

The crowds gathered, and the delegates waited anxiously. When the German reply came it was more or less a negative. They were not willing to withdraw, but agreed not to concentrate on the frontier, provided France and Belgium showed similar restraint. The German estimate of the number of their troops was nearly 30,000; the French put it at 90,000. The probable number was about 60,000, but in this atmosphere of recrimination and falsehood constructive negotiation became increasingly difficult. It was pointed out by well-informed observers in Berlin that it was useless to expect Hitler to withdraw, as he was on the eve of an election, and a re-garrisoned Rhineland would be the chief plank on the Nazi platform.

While Eden was giving dinner-parties in honour of the Locarno delegates, and the crisis, if still necessitating intense diplomatic activity, had become a discreet and almost surreptitious affair between gentlemen, Hitler was encircling Germany

with a militant mysticism. At Munich he cried: "I go on my way with the assurance of a somnambulist, the way which Providence has sent me." Then two big parades at Frankfurt and Mainz were suddenly called off, and Hitler unexpectedly left Munich for Berlin.

One reason for this dramatic *volte-face* was that Eden had recommended that Germany be invited to make her contribution to the Locarno talks. As the Powers, by their very procedure, had acquiesced in facts made by Germany alone, it was difficult to ostracise her from international collaboration. Eden's invitation was duly confirmed and delivered. Neurath accepted on two conditions: first, the guarantee of the old equality thesis, and secondly, Hitler's latest peace proposals as the basis of immediate negotiations.

There was a period of complete uncertainty; then, after Eden had exerted formal and informal pressure on Berlin, the Germans, led by Ribbentrop, arrived. The British public was seeing Eden's arbitration technique in his most important contest and on his home ground. The British public was impressed. The papers were full of Britain's Architect of Peace. Only one small item of political news marred the Eden epic. It was reported on 17th March that there was a disturbance in Spain in which a number of Fascists and Socialists were killing each other. It aroused no particular comment at the time—war and bloodshed were taken as being a part of Spanish culture.

On 18th March, the empty chair at the conference was filled. Ribbentrop, dapper and self-possessed, had arrived. The same men were in fact two bodies: the League Council was an enlarged Locarno Conference. This disposition of diplomatic forces gave Eden scope for warning Germany without unduly ruffling her susceptibilities. To the Council he was able to say frankly that the League must find that a breach of Versailles had been committed. "It was clear that Hitler did not mean war. Now was the opportunity to rebuild." The strain of this double diplomacy was great. Duff-Cooper, at a Conservative

lunch, assured him that he was sustained by "an overwhelming feeling of national confidence."

On 19th March, Ribbentrop stated the German case. It was simply that the Franco-Soviet pact had made Locarno null and void. The next day Eden was reporting to the House his hopes of a world conference. Germany was invited to lay her claim before the Hague Court, and asked not to increase the number of her troops in the zone or to fortify it. Three days later Eden received Ribbentrop, who had brought over a written reply. The delegates were playing for time, were negotiating on lines that were parallel and accordingly did not intersect. On 25th March, Germany was allowed a glimpse of democratic solidarity in the signing of the Anglo-French-American Naval Treaty.

Eden followed it up the next day with one of his most important statements to the House on the nature of British foreign policy. He roused members to an unaccustomed enthusiasm by the impressive dignity of his words. Loud cheers greeted his refusal to be "the first British Foreign Secretary to go back on a British signature." Locarno was "a new label for an old fact," for it remained a vital interest of this country that no hostile forces should cross the French or Belgian frontiers. We were not arbiters but guarantors of Locarno. But our fundamental obligation under Locarno was to seek a peaceful solution—which was the reason Eden gave for his disagreement with the French and Belgian view that sanctions should be imposed against Germany.

The Times first leader was full of praise. "Mr. Eden's explanation of British policy yesterday was an admirable Parliamentary performance—the best, because the most spontaneous, he has given since he became Foreign Secretary. The argument was careful, vigorous and cogent; and it was all the stronger for being deliberately defensive. The reception of the speech by the House as a whole was proof that he had reassured public opinion." *The Times* was happy that the Government did not take a purely "legalistic" view of treaties.

Germany's reaction was typified by the *Börsen-Zeitung*: "We hope, Mr. Eden, that we can take you at your word." Officially, Germany was silent. Hitler was making a "peace appeal"—in one of Krupps' armament factories—and in doing so struck an uncompromising patriotic note. In Italy it was reported that the speech was received "with the disapproval turned upon all Mr. Eden's acts and utterances." He was reproached for ignoring Italy's position as a Locarno signatory, though it would have seemed that he was doing Mussolini a kindness by leaving him out. Beck told Eden personally that Poland was happy about the speech, while the French were "cordial, even warm."

March ended with Eden accepting a D.C.L. from Durham University and planning a holiday in Morocco which he had to cancel. April was to be a month of violent and critical activity beginning with Ribbentrop handing to Eden the German Peace Plan. It was verbose. In substance it amounted to a four-month standstill order. In his statement to the House acknowledging the German proposals he declared that they contained "many indications of future policy, all favourably received," but a pause was necessary. During the pause there were to be staff talks between Britain, France, and Belgium. It was a concession to French prestige, but it could not be a repetition of 1914. The opinion of Parliament and the people was decisive against any loose uncertain arrangement involving *de facto* moral or military commitments.

Eden gave the only assurance open to him. No military action would be taken unless Germany invaded France or Belgium. He asked the House to believe that conciliation had not yet failed. He was sympathetic to Attlee's wise suggestion that all League Powers should be brought into the staff talks. But Eden's dilemma was real. Flandin had desired action.

For Flandin the Rhineland crisis was the decisive moment in post-war Franco-German relations. If France was to give effect to her legal victory, the Rhineland coup was likely to be the last occasion on which violation of Versailles could be punished with comparative safety. If this opportunity was lost,

France would have to consider a new mode of security—the Little Entente would cease to be an insurance and would rapidly become a liability. After March, 1936, this became Flandin's thesis, until by October, 1938, we find him watching the rape of Czechoslovakia with ill-concealed complacency as an issue no longer touching French security.

In March, 1936, Flandin had weapons to reinforce his thesis when putting it to Eden and the British Government. The Abyssinian war was not going according to Geneva's schedule. If Eden would not help Flandin in the Ruhr, Flandin would not help Eden in the Suez.

By 8th April, Eden was back in Geneva, angry and impatient at the delays in conciliation. Five weary weeks had passed since the appeals to the Italian and Abyssinian Governments. Eden concurred in the suggestion that 14th April should be the time-limit. Italy's intentions were still a mystery, until a few hours later it became known that Mussolini was to annihilate the Ethiopian forces. There had been widespread rumours about poison-gas. Eden spoke out: "The employment by the Italian armies of poison-gas raises the question whether any international conventions are of any value whatsoever." Finally, on 10th April, an appeal was sent to Italy—and with mocking correctitude to Abyssinia as well—not to use poison-gas. So effectively had Laval and the pro-Italian minority in the League put the brakes on procedure that, as *The Times* points out: "Plain speaking by Mr. Eden was needed to obtain even this gentle reproof of the Italian use of gas." Eden was fighting a rearguard action. Intense propaganda was needed if the Committee of Thirteen was to make conciliation a reality for Abyssinia, while if the German peace proposals were to have practical meaning they would have to be explained by Hitler in great detail.

Eden was at work on his famous questionnaire. For a few days in the middle of April, he and his family were the guests of Sir Philip Sassoon, who has always been an intimate friend. As art connoisseurs and travellers Eden and Sassoon have com-

mon interests. Eden's holiday coincided with a fresh Italian Press campaign, which singled out the Foreign Secretary for special condemnation. Italy was "determined to resist bullying," and disliked Eden's "individual and overbearing policy." By 17th April, Eden was back in Geneva. French efforts for peace had broken down, and Eden was represented in the Italian Press as playing a losing game. Eden's reaction was, two days later, to take a firm line at Geneva. Speaking in clear, ringing tones, he said existing sanctions must be maintained and more economic and financial added. The Protocol of 1925 against the use of poison-gas was our charter against extermination. We could not afford to pass over this violation of it. We must stick to the League: the alternative was anarchy.

During May and June events moved, and Eden with them, to their tragic conclusions. On one day he was telling his constituents that the rapid re-equipment of the three Services was absolutely imperative, on the next he had to give Parliament an account of the Emperor of Abyssinia's flight from Addis Ababa. It will be recalled that no sooner had Eden's questionnaire been put to Hitler than Aloisi startled the world by walking out of the League Council. The questionnaire was Hitler's pretext for taking offence, and shelving the embarrassing search for a Peace Plan. The questions, carefully and cleverly framed as they were, in their reference to Hitler's proposals, reduced themselves to one practical issue: Does Germany intend to enter into and keep any treaty in future, or are her past repudiations the precedent on which she will act? It was virtually impossible for Hitler to give a frank reply to this, or even to admit the need to do so. Peace would have to await a bigger gesture than Eden's questionnaire before it would re-enter the deserted halls of Europe.

CHAPTER 17

PLATFORM SANCTIONS

SPEAKING at Windsor in June, Baldwin was praising his Foreign Secretary as "a man of great ideals and a man of great courage. He has been accused of throwing over all he has believed in. He has thrown over nothing."

But a few days before what appeared to be a very powerful intrigue against Eden had come to a head with a remarkable speech by Neville Chamberlain at the 1900 Club. The Chancellor of the Exchequer crossed over the frontiers of the Treasury and committed an act of unprovoked aggression on Eden and the Foreign Office. In what was, for him, an unusually flamboyant and vigorous phrase, he associated sanctions with "midsummer madness."

Although the "midsummer madness" speech was the outcome of deep personal conviction, it would seem that it was also a *ballon d'essai* on behalf of the Cabinet as a whole. But whatever the motive underlying it might be, it produced an almost unanimously favourable press. Only the *Yorkshire Post*, naturally, and *The Times*, surprisingly, were with Eden. Baldwin himself, when pressed in the House, "made no complaint of what Mr. Chamberlain had said."

This ambiguity could not be sustained, and the Government obviously had no intention of sustaining it. In May, Sir Austen Chamberlain, the fiercest critic of the Hoare-Laval proposals, became the stern opponent of the ineffective sanctions. The Tory back-benchers applauded him for saying what they all felt but had lacked the courage to say themselves. Sir Austen may well have felt that his own change of front would make Eden's position easier; but nothing could be done to save the Foreign

Secretary the ordeal of repudiating the policy by which he had stood before the world.

On 18th June, before a crowded and expectant House Eden displayed considerable debating skill in conducting his strategic withdrawal. But he spoke in a toneless voice and without conviction. The knight-errantry was over: his was the speech of a man stunned into indifference.

The debate which followed was of a greater valour than discretion. Labour spokesmen fell into the trap of overstating their case, and it was left to Lloyd George to expose the real weakness of Eden's position. Eden had spoken of the well-ordered ranks of the League, but it was Eden who was going to Geneva to break them. "In all my experience," he cried, "I have never heard a British Minister speaking on behalf of the Government come down to the House of Commons and say that Britain is beaten, that she cannot go on." Yet that was what Eden was doing. In some ways it was fortunate that the brilliance came from Lloyd George—a personal onslaught which diverted attention from the full force of party reactions.

On 1st July at the League Assembly, with the Government's "infinite regrets," he drank the cup of bitterness to the dregs.

Eden never did anything to placate the Press that was likely to be hostile to him. There was already a large number of imaginative journalists eagerly prophesying his early downfall. It was good news value to identify the hated League of Nations with a hated personality. As far back as April the *Daily Mail* was forecasting Eden's removal in favour of Halifax. Another paper did its best to send him to Hollywood, circulating rumours of a lucrative film contract. A big director had apparently "discovered" him, and had sensed a great future for him as Clive Brook's double! But not only at home was the destructive element at work. The strategic significance and political prestige of Geneva was passing. Its moral authority was mocked.

In the middle of July, Eden took a well-deserved rest from

the hateful sequence of crisis and disillusion. But even his holiday was suspect. Rumours had been spread about that he had been forced to take it because of Hitler's failure to deliver a reply to the questionnaire. It was felt that he might do so if Eden was out of the way! But no sooner had Eden left Geneva, Parliament and the Foreign Office to their own resources than the ever-increasing tension in Spain turned from a few spasmodic clashes into a civil war.

The session had ended in July with a broad survey from Eden. There were minor successes to report: the Montreux Conference, which re-militarised the Dardanelles, was in Eden's estimate a valuable example to Europe of how peaceful and legal methods could lead to a settlement more favourable all round than unilateral repudiations. Freedom of passage through the straits in peace time and the international character of the Black Sea had been maintained, while a sentimental link between Turkey and Great Britain was forged by Turkey's offer to take care of the British war graves in Gallipoli.

In August he signed an important treaty with Egypt, over the details of which he had exercised a close supervision. It allowed Britain to station troops in Egypt to fulfil an Anglo-Egyptian alliance for the joint defence of the Suez Canal. It was to survive as the cornerstone of Britain's Middle East defence structure under conditions both of hot and cold war for eighteen of its twenty years' term. Then under circumstances never envisaged when the original treaty was made, it fell to Eden's lot to make the final settlement withdrawing the British garrison from the Canal and confirming Egypt's full sovereignty. This link between Eden of 1938 and of 1954 is a short reminder of how long he has been responsible for the direction of British foreign policy. At 57 he was in fact the most experienced Foreign Minister in the world. It was a generous and statesmanlike solution to a number of political and administrative misunderstandings, which had been rankling both in Cairo and London over a period of sixteen years.

During the second part of 1936 Eden did something to re-

store his damaged prestige. In fact, he was only marking time, but to the progressives it seemed he was in readiness for a fresh advance. In the first place the arrival of M. Blum and the Popular Front opened up to Eden new opportunities of collaboration with France. It should be noted that Eden and Blum soon found that they had other than purely political affinities. It is recorded that at a time of grave crisis in the Spanish situation, when the ministers were behind locked doors and supposed to be in anxious deliberation, they were in fact carefully dissecting the varied qualities of a Proust novel. For Blum and Eden alike Proust was a formative intellectual influence.

The Laval-Flandin period had involved constant pressure from both sides to achieve even the semblance of unity. Blum had hardly time to look round before the Spanish conflict was creating a wholly new frontier and security problem for France. Out of this dilemma Eden and Blum brought forth Non-Intervention in Spain. This was an astute diplomatic response to a complex and protracted crisis although in one respect the British position failed to allow for sufficient tactical manoeuvre. In all the deliberations of the Non-Intervention Committee the British Government alone was officially committed to a policy of Non-Intervention in advance. We lacked an essential bargaining weapon during the weary weeks of the committee's deliberations. Maisky, Grandi and Ribbentrop could always add the sanction that unless their views were given full weight they would have to consult their Governments. It was known that the British Government had been consulted and had given its word already. Moreover, the objectives of Non-Intervention were hardly forceful enough to resist the ideological nature of the conflict. Although springing primarily from Spanish causes, the war was soon inextricably bound up with the Fascist and Communist aims. Mussolini and Hitler saw in it an admirable opportunity to strengthen their strategic position in the world, and Spain became a factor in their growing friendship. In July, Hitler concluded a pact with Schuschnigg, Germany recognising the "full sovereignty" of

Austria and in no way disturbing the tripartite agreement of 1934 among Italy, Austria and Hungary. This settlement made possible a relaxation of tension on the Brenner, but Hitler went farther, and turned his moral approval of the Duce's Abyssinian adventure into positive recognition of the conquest.

Spain, to begin with, allowed a new field of enterprise for what was soon to be known as the Berlin-Rome axis. In July, Eden and Blum made a last attempt to revive the ghost of Locarno by issuing an immediate invitation to the German and Italian Governments to take part in a proposed meeting of all five Locarno Powers. The objective was to destroy divisions in Europe and attain a general settlement. But the gesture was no recompense for the prospect of remunerative aggression cheaply. Eden's resolve to isolate the Spanish conflict could not match the Dictators' determination to make it international. Fifth columns and volunteers dominated the scene.

For Eden there was in a steadily deteriorating situation little to do but to clarify British policy, both as an immediate warning to the Dictators and for their future reference. Between September and December he delivered a series of major speeches, all of them attempts to reach the essentials of our moral and military commitments.

To the League Assembly on 25th September he proclaimed League reform and gave detailed suggestions. "Machinery should be devised as early as possible to improve the working of the first paragraph of Article XI of the Covenant." In other words the article that deals with war or the threat of war should not automatically be a matter of concern to the whole League. The Council had been hampered by the rule of unanimity. Should it not in future have more freedom to make recommendations without necessarily having the consent of the parties? The danger in delay was properly stressed.

Germany, said Eden in an impressive debate on the address on 5th November, was invited to co-operate in an effort to secure an increase in the volume of world trade on the lines

indicated in the recent Three-Power Currency Declaration; but "we could not accept the doctrine proclaimed in Germany of our responsibility for her economic difficulties." It was not in accordance with the facts. We had lent Germany since the war almost as much as we had received from her by way of reparations. Mussolini had made his famous distinction between the Mediterranean as *via* for Great Britain and *vita* for Italy. Eden's reply was that it was no "short cut" for us, but "a main arterial road—a vital interest, in a full sense of the word, to the British Commonwealth of Nations."

On 14th November, Hitler issued a note denouncing the Navigation Clauses of Versailles, and Eden was forced once more to intensify the general sense of irritation and alarm by "taking a serious view" of the action and offering no remedy for it.

In this context Eden's great speech at Leamington on 20th November served a double purpose—of restoring British prestige in Europe, and Conservative prestige in Britain. One of its most interesting features is its style and the immediate contrast provided thereby with the formlessness of Baldwin's ideas and expression. Here was a younger Conservative who, even if he lacked the political resource to carry out his policy, yet all the same knew under precise headings just what he wanted. The Leamington speech gave the appearance of order to a foreign policy that was lapsing into chaos from the mere desire of the Cabinet to sit rather than to sit and think. Indeed, Eden's guiding principle was a plea for diplomacy based on "deep thinking."

Eden first of all concerned himself with the rival forms of government which it seemed were gnawing at sanity in international relationships. It was our duty to recall the objectives we had before us during the last war. They were: "Freedom and democracy at home. Peace abroad. Such should still be our objectives today." We are opposed to the formation of *blocs*. This was the basis of a communiqué agreed to between Beck and Eden following a recent visit to England by the Polish

Foreign Minister. "We mean we do not want to divide the world into democracies and dictatorships." It would be a tragedy if the League of Nations were to become the home of any ideology except the ideology of peace. "All that we in this country require and expect is that the rule of law should govern international relations and not the rule of war." In spite of defections the League was still the best system yet devised. It was now less effective than a universal league, "but the fact that we know that we cannot do everything is no excuse for doing nothing." We must, however, in present conditions, be doubly strong in order to be just.

The nine-days' wonder of the abdication intervened between this occasion and Eden's Bradford speech. The emergence of Mrs. Simpson temporarily swamped international perplexities. King, Country, and Cabinet were involved in the biggest human drama of the age. The influence of Mrs. Simpson on foreign affairs had been negligible. Some of the "set" condemned by the Archbishop of Canterbury for their influence on the King were also to be found gravitating towards the lavish hospitality of Ribbentrop, the new Nazi Ambassador. But it was Hitler's misfortune that Ribbentrop was altogether too stupid to understand the subtleties of British political influence.

As for the abdication crisis itself, it showed the world the essential resiliency of our constitution, and rescued Baldwin from the consequences of his own indolence and lack of grip in other departments of public life. Eden's speech at Bradford reflects a reinforced confidence and represents what may be regarded as the central core of his political outlook—the cross-bench mind seeking the bi-partisan approach to foreign affairs, the Baldwinian approach to public relations. "Time was when the broad lines of this country's foreign policy were not the subject of party controversy. I believe that today we are making progress towards a return to such conditions, despite differences of emphasis and detail. An impartial observer must have been impressed by the steady growth during the last few

months of united opinion on vital matters of foreign policy." But if the Government was to preserve national unity it must take the country into its confidence.

"The electors must have plain truths in plain language so that there can be no misunderstanding between us. I have spoken of the value to Europe of this country's calm. By that I mean a calm based not upon ignorance of the facts which might be dangerous, but calm due to a full knowledge and understanding of the position." Then, after a further appeal that man should avoid the crude alternatives of dictatorship to the Right and Left, he referred to the "observance of treaties and willingness to resort to free negotiation in case of disagreement" as constituting together the only true basis of international confidence.

On Spain, Eden admitted that "Non-Intervention has not worked as well as we could have wished. There have been leakages, even grave breaches, in the agreement; but that is no reason for abandoning the principle. Those who advocate its abandonment must face the alternative, and it is immeasurably grave. M. Blum has spoken of his conviction that the Non-Intervention initiative saved a European war last August. Is M. Blum right in that conviction? I for one am certainly not prepared to disagree with him."

The cumulative effect of these speeches was greatly to enhance Eden's reputation in progressive circles and to recapture the confidence of what is loosely called the floating vote. No post-war Foreign Secretary had produced so many well-ordered and comprehensive statements of policy in such quick succession. In the debate following his first Commons' speech as Foreign Secretary, which had at once attracted attention for its first-rate presentation, a Labour speaker had called him "a foolscap politician"—an unconscious tribute to the young man who had dared transcend party to become an expert in the most complex of all departments of politics.

Nineteen thirty-six had been a year of tribulations. Eden had

not emerged unscathed, but in the public mind his youth, his fan-mail appeal, made way for an impression of greater maturity. In spite of the set-backs, the clash of facts and ideals, the youthful prodigy was steadily developing into the serious statesman.

CHAPTER 18

DEALINGS WITH DICTATORS

EDEN opened 1937 with a considered appeal during an important foreign affairs debate for international appeasement, turning in particular to Germany with a plea that that country should forgo its national exclusiveness and co-operate amicably with the rest of the world. It was significant that only five days later—on 24th January—Blum echoed these sentiments in a speech at Lyons; and on the 29th Mr. Chamberlain hinted to Germany that it was within her power now to give Europe a sign of peaceful intentions which would set at rest the uneasy fears of the world.

Eden's speech is well worth pondering today. "We are prepared to co-operate in the common work of political appeasement and economic co-operation. If this work is to succeed it needs the collaboration of all. . . . Not only must the world reduce its expenditure on armaments, which is lowering the standard of life, but it has to learn the ways of economic co-operation so that the standard of life can be raised. . . . We are willing to help towards a further advance along the line of increased economic opportunity, but this should be, in our view, on one condition. Economic collaboration and political appeasement must go hand in hand. If economical and financial accommodation merely result in more armaments and more political disturbance the cause of peace will be hindered rather than helped. On the other hand a new and freer economic and financial collaboration, based upon solid and well-conceived political undertakings, will be a powerful aid towards the establishment of a unity of purpose in Europe. . . . We do not accept that the alternative for Europe lies between dictatorships of the Right and the Left. We do not accept that democ-

racies are a breeding-ground for Communism. We regard them rather as its antidote."

The context for these thoughts was a high-sounding Anglo-Italian declaration concerning freedom of transit through the Mediterranean. The declaration was still-born, but it represented a serious effort on the part of the British and Italian Governments to bring their policies into line with their respective national self-interests. Mussolini's commitments in Spain, while not extensive enough to bring Franco a quick victory, were too extensive to allow of full understanding with Great Britain. Eden for his part was not prepared to go farther than this declaration to help Mussolini out of the dilemma he had so deliberately prepared for himself. In this firmness were the seeds of Eden's ultimate resignation. Even during this debate, Opposition speakers—in particular, Sir Archibald Sinclair—drew attention to Eden's isolation in the Cabinet.

Turning to Germany, Eden considered whether the present régime could lead to stable conditions. It could do so, he thought, only by taking a full part in the normal life of the world, by reducing its armaments and by agreeing to recognise the rule of law in international relationships.

This speech, which was plainly a firm but friendly gesture to Germany, was received with coldness and with the vituperation natural to the German Press. There was more talk of out-of-date democratic ideology and of poison from Moscow. But it was soon made known that the real answer to these pernicious democratic notions of friendly co-operation would come from the Führer himself, and the Press hushed itself in expectancy for the oracular pronouncement.

It came in the form of the customary address (30th January) to the Reichstag's "Sieg Heil" members. The speech was really a reply to Eden, and the answer, at last, to his questions of the previous May of which no official notice had ever been taken. It was a final banging of the door, a closing of the frontiers, an assertion of the unbridgeable gulf that now separated the two nations.

Hitler made it clear that compromise with the new Germany was out of the question: a new history founded on blood and race had begun. He added, however, that Germany was conscious of "her European task to co-operate loyally in removing the problems which affect us and other nations." Germany did not feel isolated: as witness the recent alliance with Japan. But after much vague talk about Germany's efforts to develop peaceful relations (no mention being made of Russia or Czechoslovakia) Hitler replied to Eden's question, "Did Germany intend to honour any future treaties which she might freely sign?": "Germany will never sign a treaty in any way incompatible with Germany's honour or her vital interests, and which therefore could not in the long run be kept." In other words, Germany would continue to do as she pleased, irrespective of international law and morality. And as for Eden's offer of a disarmament agreement, Hitler replied that each country was alone the judge of what armaments it required.

Eden had proposed economic co-operation. There was, Hitler replied, no need for this: the Four-Year Plan was quite adequate for the German people, and would eventually be a blessing for them.

And Eden had said that there was no fixed division of the world between Fascism and Communism. This, said Hitler, was not true. A division had actually been created by the Treaty of Versailles; and now the division was accentuated by the dissemination of Bolshevist doctrines among all peoples.

Thus Eden was refuted, as a democratically-minded politician "moving about in worlds not realised."

On 6th February, he left London for a holiday in the south of France, leaving Lord Cranborne to answer questions in the House on the delicate state of Non-Intervention in Spain; but was back again on 2nd March to justify this laborious diplomatic fiction. He claimed, as he was later to claim in the League Assembly, that Non-Intervention had prevented the spread of war outside the Peninsula.

In the same speech he confessed his inability to believe that

the League was "yet entombed"; and hoped still for a European round-table conference.

In a speech at Aberdeen on 8th March, his attitude was hardening against the Dictators. We should co-operate first with those who are "like-minded" and should then "make every endeavour to extend the areas of co-operation." He described in particular, collaboration with the U.S.A. as "another great stabilising factor the influence and authority of which was of evident advantage to mankind." Sir Archibald Sinclair once again did not hesitate to underline the growing divergence between Eden and his Cabinet colleagues in their public statements at this time. And as if to confirm his suspicions no sooner had Eden stressed the economic causes of war than Neville Chamberlain was declaring from the fastnesses of the Exchequer that "it is far truer to say that economic difficulties spring from political causes than the other way about."

The political correspondent of the *Westminster Press*—an important group of provincial newspapers—had already caused a stir in Whitehall and Fleet Street by describing a campaign which the ambitious Ribbentrop was conducting in London to influence the Cabinet against Eden. He asserted that the new German Ambassador had met with no small measure of success. Eden's position as Foreign Secretary "has been challenged." "There is reason to believe that at recent meetings of the Cabinet proposals presented by Mr. Eden have been vetoed, and that the Opposition comes principally from Sir Samuel Hoare and Sir John Simon."

One reason given for the hostility to Eden was "anxiety on the part of certain members of the Government, and a larger number of Conservatives, to prevent any growth of Communist sympathy or influence in this country." In addition, "It is known that he would have preferred to have taken a much stronger and more active course in Spain on a number of occasions." Then there was the bitterness of Hitler's references to Eden in his Reichstag speech of 30th January, couched in terms that were intended to belittle his influence. It was noted

that when Eden referred to the close relation of economic understanding to political appeasement, the German Press at once claimed that the Foreign Secretary was not speaking for the Cabinet.

The article ended by asserting that "Ribbentrop will be closely watched. . . . For there is a large body of opinion in the country behind Mr. Eden which would resent any attempt to tie his hands at the price of securing a partial understanding with Germany to the exclusion of a general settlement of outstanding international problems."

By May all seemed comparatively well, and the naval patrol scheme was working. And then occurred a most strange incident—if, indeed, it occurred at all. The German cruiser *Leipzig*, on patrol duty, was, so the crew said, struck by a torpedo—four torpedoes, according to Herr Hitler's indignant speech later. Germany took the affair with a carefully staged solemnity, and pompously announced the withdrawal of her fleet from waters where it was the object of "Red target-practice." It seemed as though the whole elaborate edifice of control was about to break down. It was only by the exercise of Eden's special diplomatic gifts—patience and persistence allied to mastery of essential detail that new British proposals were put forward, urged upon the reluctant governments, and finally set out in the British Compromise Plan of 14th July. The formula was to link the two problems of withdrawal and granting of belligerent rights—in that order. Then in the House of Commons Eden stressed the fact that belligerent rights would be granted conditionally upon the withdrawal of volunteers.

It was at the end of July that Neville Chamberlain, who had taken over the Premiership from Baldwin, immediately after the Coronation and during the Empire Conference, made his first important excursion into foreign affairs when he sent a personal letter in his own handwriting to Mussolini. Chamberlain thus forcefully expressed his desire to overcome current misunderstandings between Britain and Italy and his readiness to undertake more drastic action on the British behalf than had

been taken heretofore. Baldwin's retirement had meant the end of the happy-go-lucky era. A Cabinet that was disintegrating from lack of internal and external compulsion now found itself under a wholly different command. Ministers had to bring daily reports about their Departments. Clocking-in replaced rolling-up.

Discussion of the British plan continued through July and August with no likelihood of agreement; and then the Spanish problem took a new turn. The increasing attacks on shipping by submarines that were obviously not Spanish roused France to suggest an immediate Mediterranean conference. Italy and Germany might set up a hostile state in Spain across our Imperial communications; might defy all rules of law; but when it came to the point of interference with British trade by sinking British cargoes it was time to act. And when an Italian torpedo was fired at the destroyer *Havoc*, it was time to act quickly.

The history of the Nyon Conference is well-known. It was not without its humour. The nervous susceptibilities of the great totalitarian states with regard to Geneva were soothed by choosing Nyon (a few miles away from the pestilential Palace of the League), as the scene of the conference. Nyon would have become a repetition of the Non-Intervention Conference but for the lucky accident that the coarse accusations of Russia so offended the delicacy of Italy and Germany that they found it impossible to sit at the same table with Bolshevik representatives. And, strangely enough, in their absence the scheme for preventing piracy in the Mediterranean was drawn up and signed in four days. It was signed by nine countries, and it was immediately effective. The piracy disappeared, and all the submarines that for months had been not only making war on neutral shipping but breaking the rules of war, vanished suddenly, as though Prospero had exercised his might and sent them back to Naples. This is how collective security can work. It worked because there was a firm intention that it should.

Eden broadcast from Geneva after the conference an ac-

count of the successful agreement and made some very plain statements about the piratical affairs of that sea which the Italians call *Mare Nostrum*. It was a question in effect of a "masked highwayman who does not stop short of even murder. A conference was necessary to mark clearly the horror which must surely be felt by all civilised peoples at the barbarous methods employed in these submarine attacks. Moreover, the size of the Mediterranean and the consequent extent of the problem made collective deliberation leading to swift collective action imperative."

He referred to a "gangster terror of the seas" and to the utter disregard shown by the "unidentified" submarines for the rules laid down by the Treaty of 1930 and the Protocol of 1936. Against this, the Conference had "set up in that sea a police force; and if any submarines attempt again to embark on evil courses they will, I hope and believe, receive the punishment they deserve."

The success of Nyon was galling to the Italians, who vented their annoyance upon Eden himself. "We seem to be back in the days of Baldwin," remarked one newspaper, "when Eden was supreme master of foreign policy. As long as Eden is at the head of the Foreign Office we must be on our guard."

By October, 1937, Neville Chamberlain was actively dominating the principal offices of State. His amateur interest in foreign affairs had developed into a keen resolve to short circuit the laborious negotiations of the Foreign Secretary. Unless Eden could show to the Premier and Cabinet that the "usual diplomatic channels" were clear and open to decisive results, Eden's days were numbered. He was subjected to the sinister criticism of an inner Cabinet that was forming round the Premier. Chamberlain's informal advisers were beginning to find Eden's internationalism inconvenient. European settlement—short term if you will—was what was needed to revive our sluggish industry.

Chamberlain for his own part was impressed with the me-

chanics of dictatorial foreign policy. Their philosophy and morals might be at fault—dictators were often at a disadvantage there—but their technique was something that the democracies could not afford to ignore. The other side of the picture was Eden's growing resentment at inspired interference in the daily routine of his office. The events of October helped to intensify these disruptive personal elements. A great speech by President Roosevelt, widely interpreted as a reversal of the Monroe Doctrine, was followed by new atrocities and a widening of the area of hostilities in the Far East. The League Assembly adopted the recommendations of its Far Eastern Advisory Committee to invite the signatories of the Washington Nine-Power Conference "to initiate the consultations provided for under that treaty."

Eden used a routine Government speech at Llandudno as a serious call to the nations. Our belief in Non-Intervention "does not mean that we are prepared to acquiesce in dilatory tactics. If the Committee is now unable to make progress, as it was unable to make progress last July, then I fear it is useless to conceal from ourselves the gravity of the situation. . . . I for one should certainly not be prepared to utter criticism of any nation which, if such conditions continue, felt compelled to resume its freedom of action. . . . We have said more than once that we in this country have no concern with the forms of governments of foreign states. . . . But such toleration must be general, and, if we have no intention to seek to make all States in Europe democratic, so others should not seek to make all States in Europe either Fascist or Communist."

Then to the particular point, which was aimed perhaps more directly at his Cabinet colleagues than at Hitler and Mussolini: "I am as anxious as anybody to remove disagreements with Germany and Italy, or any other country, but we must make sure that in trying to improve the situation in one direction it does not deteriorate in another. In such an event our last state might be no better or even worse than the former. We are ready and eager to make new friends, but we will not do that by part-

ing with old ones. We are in a period of storm and challenge when the hope is openly avowed that the variety of international anxieties will prevent effective resistance to unlawful causes in any one sphere. This is dangerous doctrine. No nation will profit by such practices in the end. There will be a Nemesis."

The sentiments of the Llandudno speech were admirable, but the two questions Lloyd George asked were: "First, what does he mean; and, second, what does he mean to do?" It would perhaps have been wiser to ask Chamberlain these questions. As long as Eden could spellbind the Opposition he served a purpose. But it was Chamberlain who supplied the answers. He sent Eden to Brussels and in his absence decided to send Halifax to Berlin. The Brussels Conference was a fiasco from the outset. After three weeks of humiliating effort, it told the world that a suspension of hostilities in the Far East would be in the best interests not only of China and Japan but of all nations. A proposal by the American delegate to remind Japan of her undertakings under the Kellogg Pact not to resort to force provoked "something like a panic in certain delegations which see in it almost a condemnation of aggression. It had therefore to be dropped."

There are pictures taken during these barren days of an Eden dejected and disillusioned. Soon after the Brussels Conference began he retired to bed with a cold, and rumours were spread abroad at once that the indisposition was diplomatic in its origin. The disturbance in Europe made a "Save China" policy an embarrassment even to consider much less to execute. For Eden the Conference was from every point of view a serious personal reverse. In particular it peeled the skin off Anglo-American collaboration, and Eden was heavily committed to selling its advantages to the Cabinet. It was obvious that to go to Brussels at all was to court disaster.

One London diplomatic correspondent cabled to New York that before leaving Eden actually offered Chamberlain his resignation, and was only after intense pressure persuaded to

retract. It was common knowledge that Eden had great objections to the projected Hitler-Halifax conversations. It was an attempt which drew comparison with Haldane's mission of 1912 to come to a general settlement with Germany. Informed and inspired comment at the time confirmed the unpalatable truth that the price of such a settlement would be high. Germany would return to the League only if the League was stripped of the last vestiges of its political and moral authority. Britain would have to abandon Austria, recognise Franco and condone some formula for Czechoslovakia that would give the Nazis the substance of power over the Sudetenland. In return for all this Germany would restore peace to Spain and defer her claims to colonies for a few years. Such were the harsh implications of appeasement at the end of 1937. Acceptance of any one of the German demands would mean the deliberate abandonment of Eden's whole policy. The visit itself in so far as it encouraged German hopes that the British Government was in the market for a deal of this character was a blow to his diplomatic prestige. The importance of Halifax at Berchtesgaden was the fearful revelation provided of the growing scale and quickening tempo of Nazi ambition. From now on there could be no excuse for failing to recognise that Hitler's appetite grew with what it fed on.

Halifax naturally did not commit himself, and does not in any case seem to have made a particularly good impression on Hitler. The ponderous sincerity that met with a response in Gandhi was not necessarily adapted to evoke enthusiasm in the sombre psychopath of Berchtesgaden.

Also it would seem that the proposals were more than the Cabinet could stomach. By the beginning of December Eden's position with his colleagues was described as being "tremendously strong as the result of Berchtesgaden." There had been something unsatisfactory about the whole approach. It left an unpleasant taste in the mouth, and Chamberlain was never able to explain it or make party capital out of it.

Apart from the muted Halifax mission nothing happened to Eden in public, nor was he himself responsible for any statement between December 1937 and February 1938 which could have led the uninstructed layman to suspect that he was being forced into a position that would compel him to resign. The session ended with Eden having briskly rebuffed the Socialist opposition's futile attempt to discredit the Government for appointing agents to General Franco. Eden spoke that night with the detachment of a Civil Servant obviously relishing the chance it gave him to confine the issue to one of technical convenience. There was the usual end-of-term debate, and although the Far Eastern situation had gone from bad to worse—Nanking had fallen—Eden was able to point to the growth of a new outlook in the United States—disaster and outrage such as the sinking of the *Panay* had admittedly helped to produce it—but it was a deeper sentiment than that. Anglo-American collaboration would prevail, and further, we were not without friends in Europe.

CHAPTER 19

RESIGNATION

UNTIL a week before his fateful decision, Eden was carrying on as though his future in the Foreign Office was assured. The *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mail* were reporting rumours of a Cabinet split involving Eden, but those who had a reputation for being in closer touch with Cabinet circles scouted the suggestion as symptomatic of Yellow Press inaccuracy. Ronald Cartland, the youngest and most progressive of the Midland Tory M.P.'s, had organised a vast demonstration of young Conservatives for Eden in Birmingham. Cartland was a man of energy and vision. The large audience was grouped and seated according to districts. Searchlights played on them and on the speaker.

Eden was in his best collective-security form. "In any agreements we make today there must be no sacrifice of principles and no shirking of responsibilities merely to obtain quick results. . . . It is not by seeking to buy goodwill that peace is made, but on a basis of frank reciprocity with mutual respect." These brave assertions roused his youthful audience to the most vociferous enthusiasm. Here was the leader of the new Tory Democrats addressing the devoted rank-and-file of the future.

As for the present, Winston Churchill, commenting on the speech in the *Evening Standard* on 17th February, wrote that "these words may be taken to represent not only the views of the Foreign Secretary but those of Mr. Neville Chamberlain, and consequently of His Majesty's Government and the British Parliament." Eden's visit to Birmingham coincided with Schuschnigg's to Berchtesgaden. Eden perhaps was encouraged to be bold, being well aware of the reception the Austrian Chancellor was receiving.

The world was waiting anxiously for the latest of Hitler's monologues. He was expected to refer not only to the inner meaning of the great army purge, carried out with his customary finesse and precision at the beginning of the month, but also to his plans for the immediate future. The world had to pay close attention to this extraordinary man's neuroses. It was reported that he was in a difficult and intransigent mood.

Opinion in the Parliamentary lobbies was gloomy. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Conservative Party, which included about one hundred Government supporters, had met on the Thursday evening, and the burden of its opinion was that the Government should be strongly supported if it decided to adopt a vigorous attitude in dealing with the situation. No formal resolution was passed, but the attitude adopted was conveyed to Ministers. It was reported that private representations were made in favour of some move which would tend to counter the alarm created in Europe by the Nazi treatment of Austria.

On the night of Friday, 18th February, Chamberlain had been speaking in Birmingham, and Eden in Kenilworth. There was no hint of schism in the Cabinet. *The Times* diplomatic correspondent gave a detailed account of Grandi's visit to Downing Street on Friday morning when he conferred with the Prime Minister and Eden. He had brought no reply from the Italian Government about the control of volunteers. In the earlier talks it had been emphasised that "the Italian support on this point would make much easier the discussion of Anglo-Italian relations in general." The correspondent added that "in the absence of a reply to these particular questions the more general issue of the Anglo-Italian relations was discussed—not simply Abyssinia, but the whole balance of power in the Mediterranean."

On Saturday the Cabinet met, and it sat for nearly three and a half hours. It then adjourned until 3:00 P.M. on Sunday. The length of the meeting aroused intense curiosity. "The principal point at issue," stated the diplomatic correspondent of the *Sun-*

day Times, "is whether settlement of the problems of the Italian troops in Spain and anti-British propaganda should be made a condition precedent to a full agreement." Chamberlain and Eden were described as reporting to their colleagues the conversations they had had with Grandi, and as inviting them to decide on the subjects to be included in the projected talks with Italy, and the order in which they were to be discussed.

The meeting lasted until 6:15 P.M. Eden then spent a further fifteen minutes with the Prime Minister, leaving with Walter Elliott and W. S. Morrison. Hoare and Kingsley Wood did not leave until 7:00 P.M. These groupings were regarded as a fair symbol of the alignment of forces within the Cabinet. Although Hitler was expected to have finished his speech before the Sunday Cabinet met "it is unlikely that its terms will be before the Cabinet."

Eden's departure from the Foreign Office had much the same dramatic content as the abdication of King Edward VIII. Both crises were sudden, sharp and unforeseen. In both there was the sense of personal tragedy and loss, of promise cut off in mid-career, of intrigue and harsh decision, and of moral issues not fully understood because not fully revealed.

Eden's resignation might have remained a suppressed episode for many years had not Winston Churchill in the first volume of his great war history with its devastating analysis of appeasement brought new facts to light. Subsequently Duff-Cooper's autobiography published just before his death, the Ciano Papers and Keith Feiling's biography of Neville Chamberlain have further lifted the veil. Essentially the conflict sprang from Chamberlain's resolve to implement his policy of appeasement by acting as his own Foreign Secretary without undue reference to the Foreign Office and over the head of its political chief. The New Year had seen the cryptic announcement (covered by a G.C.B. in the Honours List) of the removal of Vansittart from the post of Permanent Under-Secretary and Eden's right-hand man to a newly-created position of Govern-

ment adviser to whom problems would be remitted no longer on a daily basis but "as required." Under cover of this "promotion" the way was prepared for the more significant elevation of Sir Horace Wilson to the unprecedented status of head of the Civil Service, in which capacity he soon became the chief instrument of Chamberlain's personal rule.

While these dispositions were being made and Eden was himself taking a brief holiday in the South of France, Chamberlain was suddenly confronted with a major challenge to his policy from a wholly unexpected quarter.

On 11th January, 1938, Mr. Sumner Welles, the American Under-Secretary of State, had called upon the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Ronald Lindsay, bearing a secret and confidential message from President Roosevelt to Mr. Chamberlain. The President, "deeply anxious at the deterioration of the international situation," proposed to take the initiative by inviting the representatives of certain of the minor Powers to Washington to try to reach agreement on some political principles and seek the support of the major Powers thereafter. He wished, however, at the outset, to have the British Government's view of the plan before he took any definite action, and he stipulated that no other Government should be informed either of the nature or even the existence of the proposal. He asked for a reply by 17th January. If that reply indicated "the cordial approval and wholehearted support of His Majesty's Government," he would then approach France, Germany and Italy. "Here," comments Churchill, "was a formidable and measureless step." It presented, says Duff-Cooper, an immense opportunity.*

Sir Ronald Lindsay forwarded this message to London with a strong recommendation that it should be accepted. In due course, the British Ambassador's message was received at the Foreign Office on 12th January, and copies were sent that evening to the Prime Minister, who was in the country. He returned

* For a full account of this episode see *The Second World War, Vol. I* ("The Gathering Storm") and Duff-Cooper, *Old Men Forget*.

to London and within twenty-four hours, on his own responsibility and without attempting to contact or consult Eden in France, he sent a cabled reply to the White House explaining that while he appreciated Mr. Roosevelt's action, he wished to point out that "His Majesty's Government would be prepared, for their part, if possible with the authority of the League of Nations, to recognise the *de jure* occupation of Abyssinia, if they found that the Italian Government on their side, were ready to give evidence of their desire to contribute to the restoration of confidence and friendly relations." The Prime Minister mentioned these facts, the message continued, so that the President might consider whether his present proposal might not cut across the British efforts. Would it not therefore be wiser to postpone the launching of the American plan? While there is no indication, in Mr. Churchill's narrative, that Grandi ever knew of this overture from the President of the United States, Chamberlain's reply seems clearly to indicate how deeply he was committed to his private negotiations with the Italian Ambassador.

On 15th January, Eden returned hastily to England. He had been urged to do so, says Mr. Churchill, "by his devoted officials at the Foreign Office." "Deeply perturbed," he immediately sent a telegram to Sir Ronald Lindsay in Washington in an attempt to minimise the effects of Chamberlain's "chilling answer." On the 18th, a letter arrived from the President expressing his concern at the British proposal—that of *de jure* recognition of the Italian position in Abyssinia—in no unmeasured terms. That letter was considered by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, and Eden succeeded in procuring some modification of the previous attitude. After a few days, further communications went to Washington, pointing out that while the Prime Minister warmly welcomed the President's initiative, he was not anxious to bear any responsibility for its failure if the American overtures were badly received. This was not the "cordial approval and wholehearted support" that the President had regarded as essential before going any

further. Moreover, as Duff-Cooper observes, "It was too late, the great opportunity had been missed." Chamberlain's "douche of cold water," as Mr. Sumner Welles describes the Prime Minister's reception of the President's proposal, was no doubt actuated by Chamberlain's fear that the Dictators would pay no heed, or would "use this line-up of the Democracies as a pretext for a break." This is the suggestion put forward by Chamberlain's biographer, Keith Feiling, who goes on to say that on Eden's return "it was found that he would rather risk that calamity than the loss of American goodwill." But that is to misunderstand the basis of Eden's whole approach to the international situation at this period, which was all in favour of collective security and agreement through open discussion, if possible within the terms of reference of the League, and if not, within the principles of League diplomacy. For the Anthony Eden of 1938, it could never have been a question of "American goodwill" at any price—nor, indeed, has he shown the slightest inclination to uphold so narrow a view since his return to the Foreign Office in 1951.

In spite of Eden's dismay at Chamberlain's rejection of the Roosevelt offer and his efforts to qualify it, he did not give the impression to his colleagues that he was actually considering his position in the Government. Churchill sums up the incident by asserting that "it defined in a decisive manner the difference of view between Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary"; he is also at pains to point out that "most of the Ministers thought he was satisfied. He did not make it clear to them that he was not." Duff-Cooper throws additional light on the Cabinet's general state of unawareness. He explains that the Defence Ministers were not members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet where these matters of high policy were at that time discussed. "The Cabinet as a whole," he adds, "learnt of the President's message only when the whole matter was past history, nor were we told that there had been any divergence of opinion" between Eden and Chamberlain.

Duff-Cooper was equally "on the outside looking in" over

the progress of negotiations with the Italian Ambassador. As late as the 13th February he noted in his diary, "The Press this week have got hold of a quite untrue story that there is a profound disagreement between Anthony and the Prime Minister over friendship with Italy. There is no foundation in it." "In this case," he adds, "the Press was better informed than the Cabinet Minister, and when a special meeting of the Cabinet was announced for Saturday afternoon, 19th February, I had no idea of the reason for such an unusual procedure." It was at the eleventh hour therefore that the Cabinet had its first knowledge of the rift. As it was presented to them during the prolonged discussion throughout that Saturday afternoon Chamberlain was insisting on immediate conversations with the Italians and an early public announcement to that effect. Eden on the other hand was standing by the thesis that Mussolini must show some sign of honouring engagements already entered into, especially in regard to Spain, before any new talks were opened. According to Duff-Cooper, "He believed that there was some secret agreement between Hitler and Mussolini and that the latter had received some *quid pro quo* for his acquiescence in the assault on Austria. Grandi denied that this was so. The Prime Minister believed him: the Foreign Secretary did not." Only at the end of the three and a half hour discussion on the Saturday did Eden make it plain that he intended to resign. His resolve came as a great shock to many of his colleagues and it was at once appreciated that such a decision could easily bring about the Government's downfall.

Sunday, 20th February, was a day of severe tension. The Hitler speech was long and dull. It lasted three hours, and settled nothing. According to a cynical German diplomatic expert, for the first hour it was statistics supplied by Goering; for the second, invective at the expense of the foreign press by Ribbentrop; for the third, a peroration by Goebbels. As far as the events of that Sunday in London were concerned, his furious attack on Bolshevism, which he coupled with taunts at British statesmen, and in particular Eden, were to have the

most immediate effect on his world audience. Eden he accused of being blind to the menace of Communism, and of poisoning international relations by permitting press attacks on Germany and Italy.

The Führer condemned the British Foreign Secretary at 2:30 on a Sunday afternoon. By 10:30 P.M. on the same day the world was informed that the British Foreign Secretary had resigned. Europe, increasingly alive to the efficacy of blackmail, drew the inevitable conclusion from this time sequence.

On that Sunday night the crowds gathered. They were silent and mystified. Photographers were busy. Journalists rushed in and out of No. 10 with that noticeable lack of ceremony or dignity which is their peculiar prerogative. "Eden and Cranborne so far!" a lobby correspondent whispered to me. He was evidently disappointed. For the clubs had been full of exciting rumours. It was expected that at least half a dozen of the Cabinet would follow Eden into exile (Malcolm MacDonald, Duff-Cooper and Belisha were mentioned, in addition to the three established "rebels," Elliott, Morrison and Stanley).

Rumour was ahead of fact. Duff-Cooper, for instance, on the data available to him, was far from sympathetic to Eden over Italy. His attitude was that Anglo-Italian relations had been sadly mishandled and that Mussolini should not and need not have been thrown into Germany's arms. He was prepared to allow Eden discretion as to timing, but if the situation was really "now or never" his vote was for "now." The afternoon Cabinet meeting made it clear that all efforts at reconciliation had failed. The clash was not confined to the holding or handling of the Italian talks. "There was," says Duff-Cooper, "a deeper difference of outlook between them that made it difficult for them to work together." It was in fact "fundamental."

At 7.30 there was the awe-inspiring spectacle of Sir John Simon playing chess in the National Liberal Club—so what was supposed to be a second Cabinet timed for 7.30 was in fact a meeting of a small group of Ministers who had under-

taken to seek a formula for avoiding Eden's actual resignation. Eden for his part had undertaken to give his decision to them.

The Cabinet met again at 10:00 P.M. Duff-Cooper was late in arriving. In his diary he noted, "A letter from Anthony had been read announcing his inability to accept any of the compromises suggested and his determination to resign. Anthony was not there. The Prime Minister looked very exhausted."

Opposition pundits took fresh hope, and after the seven lean years began to make fantastic forecasts of the Eden Progressives backed by all the best men sweeping the nation by the mere quality of their personnel. But from an Opposition point of view it was idle to expect that Eden would turn a hand to rescue Socialists or Liberals from their plight. It was enough for the Opposition to be able to claim that Eden's departure marked the beginning of the end of National Government. Henceforth it was Tory on its own terms and unashamed. With Eden went the Conservative Party's last concession to the Middle Vote. The logic of facts would henceforth have to suffice for personal representation. One big reservation I heard that night. "If only Eden had gone on an issue the people can understand." Eden's immediate case was too obscure for a crusade. But one man understood; "Late on the night of 20th February," he records, "a telephone message reached me as I sat in my old room at Chartwell (as I often sit now) that Eden had resigned. I must confess that my heart sank, and for a while the dark waters of despair overwhelmed me. . . . There seemed one strong young figure standing up against long, dismal, drawling tides of drift and surrender, of wrong measurements and feeble impulses. My conduct of affairs would have been different from his in various ways; but he seemed to me at this moment to embody the life-hope of the British nation, the grand old British race that had done so much for men, and had yet some more to give. Now he was gone I watched the daylight slowly creep in through the windows, and saw before me in mental gaze the vision of Death."

CHAPTER 20

REASONS WHY

ON MONDAY morning with the stimulus of banner headlines excitement mounted. Eden's letter to Chamberlain was designed to stress the general as against the particular grounds of his going.

The evidence of the last few days have made plain a difference between us on a decision of great importance in itself and far-reaching in its consequences. I cannot recommend to Parliament a policy with which I am not in agreement. Apart from this, I have become conscious, as I know you have also, of a difference of outlook between us in respect to the international problems of the day, and also as to the methods by which we should seek to resolve them.

He referred to an "uneasy partnership" that was not "in the international interest."

The Premier's answer was equally resolute in its effort to see the controversy through the other end of the telescope:

My dear Anthony,

It is with the most profound regret, shared by all our colleagues, that I have received your intimation of your decision to resign the great office which you have administered with such distinction ever since you occupied it. The regret is all the greater because such differences as have arisen between us in no way concern ultimate ends or the fundamentals of our policy.

The immediate result of these letters therefore was to intensify the mystery.

The reactions of the world's Press were profuse. Those papers that were not principal in the dispute and were removed by oceans from the troubled scene were, for the most part, pro-Eden. The French Government, people and Press mourned the loss of a friend. Delbos seriously contemplated resignation in sympathy, and *L'Oeuvre* talked of an appeal to Great Britain through Sir Eric Phipps to keep Eden in the Cabinet.

In Berlin and Rome, of course, there was truculent rejoicing. Goering's paper talked about changes in world conditions rather than about changes inside the British Cabinet bringing about the fall of the Foreign Office fortress. Italy saw the downfall of its "bogy man."

As for the British press, Rothermere and Beaverbrook duly rejoiced. *The Times* and *Telegraph* were sombrely pro-Chamberlain, and congratulating themselves that there would be no fundamental change in British aims. The *News Chronicle* saluted Eden as the true champion of peace, while the *Daily Herald* saw Chamberlain coming out stark and nakedly on the side of power politics.

For the most part, the foreign and British press that took up Eden's case, linked his downfall with Hitler's speech and Mussolini's policy. Damaging secret instructions were found to have been given by the Duce to the Italian Press. As early as 20th February, 1937, he was alleged to have given the order. "Insist on the eventuality of Eden's leaving the Foreign Office. Have sent from London news of Eden's dismissal." A fortnight before the resignation the Italian Press was inspired by the decision and authority of the Italian Government to say that: "Our opinion will not change until London's foreign policy ceases to be directed by Mr. Eden. In many speeches and on many occasions he has shown his poisoned attitude of mind towards Italy."

On the whole, the world's Press understood the issue at stake, but there was an underlying implication that Chamberlain's policy would have to work itself out first before a final reckoning could be made. Further, it was recognised that the general

situation was riddled with so many dangers that it was not advisable to linger too long on the personal implications of Eden's departure.

Few personal explanations to Parliament had been anticipated with more widespread anxiety and special attention than that of Anthony Eden. He had been taken for granted. For the first time he was not available. For the first time he had decided to swim against the stream of office and promotion.

During question time in the House of Commons there was the usual laughter preceding high seriousness which helped to relieve the tension. Sir Philip Sassoon was on his feet when Eden's arrival brought a burst of cheers which drowned the reply he was reading. At last, above the tumult, Sir Philip could be heard declaring: "... another model which I hope may prove more satisfactory."

Eden's statement struck from the beginning a note of restraint. "The immediate issue is whether official conversations should be opened in Rome now. It is my conviction that the attitude of the Italian Government to international problems in general and to this country in particular is not yet such as to justify this course. The ground has been in no respect prepared. Propaganda by the Italian Government against this country is rife throughout the world. I am myself pledged to this House not to open conversations with Italy until this hostile propaganda ceases."

But Spain was only an example. The successive breaches of faith on the part of Mussolini were only examples. "We cannot consider this problem except in relation to the international situation as a whole. The conditions today are not the same as they were last July, nor even the same as they were last January. Recent months, recent weeks, recent days have seen the successive violation of international agreements and attempts to secure political decisions by forcible means. We are in the presence of the progressive deterioration of respect for international obligations. It is quite impossible to judge these things in a vacuum. In the light—my judgment may well be wrong—

of the present international situation this is a moment for this country to stand firm."

Eden had said what was expected of him. His experience as well as his conviction lay behind his grave warning to the nation. All that he had worked for was at stake. The vision of an international system based even on the most elementary principles of law and justice was being rushed into the background of world politics and Britain, it seemed, was helping this retrograde process.

The House, by its very silence, showed how deeply it was stirred. He did not stand alone. Cranborne, timidly at first, with all the subordination expected of an Under-Secretary, followed, but soon was warming to his work with a conviction that took Members by complete surprise. "It is no question of delay," he cried, "as to the time at which conversations should take place, or the method by which they should be carried on. It is a question of the conditions under which any negotiations between any countries can be carried on at all with any useful results."

In the lobbies afterwards many thought Cranborne had made the better case, while rumour got busy assessing the influence exerted in the crisis by the house of Cecil. Eden had been doubtful about the final decision; the words of Cranborne and the will of Viscount Cecil had, it was confidently reported, tipped the scales in favour of resignation.

The Prime Minister replied in his usual staccato—a speech of limited vision, perfunctory technique, but as an experienced Parliamentarian put it, "good House of Commons stuff." Winston Churchill speaks to the front bench and to those who have a taste for epigram; Chamberlain used to talk to the back benches, where wits are, comparatively speaking, dim, and "stout, honest homespun" meets a readier response. "The peace of Europe," said Chamberlain—and in the light of the subsequent Austrian and Czech crises, the words are worthy of recall—"the peace of Europe must depend upon the four major Powers, Germany, Italy, France and ourselves. . . . If we can

bring these four nations into friendly discussion, into a settling of their difficulties, we shall have saved the peace of Europe for a generation."

In spite of all the drama of the remaining debate, which went on its passionate way until the Tuesday night, a political anticlimax soon set in. The wild rumours of schisms, of middle parties, gave way to the steady acquiescence of whip-led majorities. Chamberlain was able to say on Tuesday: "We must not delude ourselves. We must not try to delude small and weak nations into thinking that they will be protected by the League against aggression." As the words were flashed to the capitals of Europe, consternation, not to say alarm, was the immediate reaction, but to the Conservative majority it was mere realism, a sound sentiment that needed saying; Eden would learn the truth one day when he had gained more experience, murmured the elders of the Carlton Club with quiet satisfaction.

Greenwood thundered, Churchill provided Greek tragedy, Lloyd George with his instinct for the realities of the political situation involved himself in an affair of honour with the Prime Minister. There had presumably been some intermediary between No. 10 Downing Street and the Italian Embassy. Lloyd George warned Eden not to be "too good a boy," and once again as father to son made it clear that people were looking out for a young man of intelligence and ideals to lead them forward. Lloyd George was convinced that Eden had the gift.

At the height of the personal exchanges between Lloyd George and Chamberlain, Eden made a quiet intervention. The specific charge was that a telegram from Grandi arrived on Sunday morning. There was a Cabinet on Sunday afternoon and the telegram was not there. What was the explanation? Chamberlain rose immediately in a tumult of cheers and counter-cheers. "Unofficially, Count Grandi communicated the contents of the telegram to me on Sunday, and I communicated them to the Cabinet." At which, Eden rose to clarify the position. The atmosphere was electric. "At the time of my resignation I had received no official information whatever from the

Italian Government. It is true the Prime Minister told me he had received such an intimation. Nothing reached the Foreign Office while I was Foreign Secretary. If it had, of course, it would have made no difference to my decision." Eden had indirectly made his point. Grandi had been negotiating contrary to accepted custom over the head of the Department to which he was accredited.

Neither Lloyd George nor the Cabinet nor even Eden himself were aware of the lengths to which Chamberlain had gone to rid himself of his Foreign Secretary. From what we now know Eden's decision to resign can only have forestalled by a matter of hours Chamberlain's obvious resolve to remove him. For arising from the meeting he and Eden had had with Grandi on the Friday, Grandi reported to Ciano, the Italian Foreign Secretary, that Chamberlain was seeking answers to questions, "which were useful to him as ammunition against Eden." "Contacts previously established," Grandi's report continues, "between myself and Chamberlain through his confidential agent proved to be very valuable. Purely as a matter of historical interest I inform Your Excellency that yesterday evening after the Downing Street meeting, Chamberlain secretly sent his agent to me (we made an appointment in an ordinary public taxi) to say that 'He sent me cordial greetings, that he appreciated my statement, which had been very useful to him and that he was confident that everything would go very well next day.' "

Duff-Cooper's comment on this astonishing report is brief and to the point, "The Prime Minister was, in fact, deliberately playing a part throughout the Cabinet discussions. While allowing his colleagues to suppose that he was anxious as any of them to dissuade the Foreign Secretary from resigning, he had, in reality, determined to get rid of him, and had secretly informed the Italian Ambassador that he hoped to succeed in doing so. Had I known this at the time, not only would I have resigned with Eden, but I should have found it difficult to sit in Cabinet with Neville Chamberlain again." He might have

added that if Lloyd George had known these facts he would have applied the *coup de grace* that he was to deliver under the shadow of disaster and invasion two years later, when with irresistible authority he called upon the same Prime Minister to sacrifice his Seals of Office.

The friends of Eden demanded that he should be given a further hearing. How far was he the victim of a threat? What were the implications of an Anglo-Italian understanding? On the Saturday he spoke to his constituents at Leamington. There was tremendous enthusiasm. When he entered the Winter Hall with his wife, the whole audience of nearly 2,000 people rose to its feet and cheered him to the echo. A. J. Cummings noted the majority of those present were young men and young women. They had been queueing for two hours before the meeting began, and many hundreds had to remain outside. First, Eden dealt with the whispering campaign which Sir John Simon in particular, with smooth inaccuracy, had done much to encourage, which was to the effect he had had to resign because his health, and therefore his judgment, had been impaired by the strain of office. "You can judge for yourself whether I look like a sick man. You shall be my witnesses that there is no shred of truth in that suggestion." He insisted that the meaning of the communications received from "a certain foreign Government" on the previous week was "now or never," and then came back to his recurring theme—it was with the great democracies that our national affinities lay.

Cummings' interpretation of the speech as a whole was "that while it yielded nothing on the immediate issue between Mr. Eden and Mr. Chamberlain, the former Foreign Secretary had scrupulously refrained from saying anything which would seem to widen the breach or deepen the injuries to the National Parties, and that by his omissions he had left open the possibility of his eventual return to the Cabinet."

CHAPTER 21

FROM MUNICH TO WAR

RESIGNATION is always a form of political death, however temporary its consequences. In this sense it may be said of Anthony Eden, more aptly than of any statesman of our day, that he was *felix opportunitate mortis*. He was to remain out of power for the next eighteen months—those disastrous months which did such grave injury to the political reputations of so many of his colleagues in Neville Chamberlain's Government. Within a few weeks, the Anschluss had been forcibly achieved, and Austria incorporated in Hitler's Reich. The spring and summer wore on to the Czechoslovak crisis and the Munich "settlement." March of the following year saw the occupation of Prague and the final destruction of Czechoslovakia, and the Anglo-French guarantee to Poland, all leading remorselessly to 3rd September, 1939, and the war which the western democracies entered in so disastrous a state of unpreparedness, and with their honour, some would maintain, already tarnished. In all these events—the desperate shifts and accommodations dictated as much by panic as by that fervent desire to save the peace which the unprejudiced historian must put to the credit of the "men of Munich"—Eden played no part.

The political rebel must always be under a strong temptation to justify his rebellion, to shift his attack from Parliament to platform and Press, to gather supporters and lead them in a dissident movement. Or if he does not carry his rebellion so far, he may at least be expected to intervene in Parliamentary debates on matters touching the department which he formerly led, and to make his views and the weight of his experience felt. From all this form of retaliation and self-assertion Eden re-

frained—as much, one may believe, from his innate sense of loyalty to his former colleagues, as from any motive of long-term policy.

On 28th April, we find him writing to Churchill, deploring the Anglo-Italian agreement signed a few days earlier, which effectively gave Italy a free hand in Abyssinia and Spain:

With regard to the Italian pact, I agree with what you write. Mussolini gives us nothing more than the repetition of promises previously made and broken by him, except for the withdrawal of troops from Libya, troops which were probably originally sent there for their nuisance value. . . . None the less I equally agree as to the need for caution in any attitude taken up towards the agreement. After all it is not an Agreement yet, and it would be wrong certainly for me to say anything which could be considered as making its fruition more difficult. After all, this is precisely what I promised I would not do in my resignation speech and at Leamington.

Two days earlier, he had made his first public announcement since his resignation speeches to Parliament and his constituents. It was an address to the Royal Society of St. George, and the theme was, fittingly enough, "England." It was a short speech, but it contained many warnings. He urged his audience not to belittle "the strident challenge of the modern world," and he pointed out that though he himself was a convinced believer in democracy, "yet it would be foolish, perhaps fatal to the very survival of democracy, to ignore the stupendous achievements realised under other forms of government. A truly immense effort has been made in the last few years by autocratic states for the fulfilment of purposes they have set before them. Their methods cannot be ours, but we should not fail to note the passionate fervour with which they are being pursued. The lesson is there to read. If we are to uphold our ideals, our conception of life, both national and international, if we

are to see them prevail, then a comparable effort must be made by us and an equal spirit be roused. Can any of us say that this is true of our country today?"

In June, speaking again in his own constituency, he repeated these warnings against the background of the mounting Czech crisis. During the third week of May invasion had appeared imminent, but the danger, following intense diplomatic activity in the European capitals somehow passed, nobody quite knew how. Eden left no doubt as to the moral he drew from these sombre developments. "Nobody will quarrel," he declared, "with the Government's wish to bring about appeasement in Europe. Any other intention would be as foolish as it would be wrong. But if appeasement is to mean what it says, it must not be at the expense either of our vital interests, or of our national reputation or of our sense of fair dealing. Appeasement will be neither real nor lasting at such a price. It would merely make real appeasement more difficult at a later stage. There must always be a point at which we, as a nation, must make a stand and we must clearly make a stand when not to do so would forfeit our self-respect and the respect of others."

In the same month Eden returned to debate foreign affairs once more in the Parliamentary arena. His rare public appearances brought significant demonstrations of mass popularity. When, for example, early in August he attended the Empire Exhibition at Glasgow he received a tremendous welcome. Later that month he was holidaymaking in Ireland and took the opportunity of lunching with De Valera—a convinced disciple of Chamberlain's policy. In September he returned to watch the war clouds gather over Europe but he was powerless to influence the course of events. As appeasement was pursued to its logical end, discerning critics could detect variations of emphasis in British policy as between Downing Street and the Foreign Office. On two critical occasions Chamberlain toned down Foreign Office pronouncements. The strength of British reactions to Hitler's designs on Czechoslovakia was likely to be revealed in the degree of support offered to France. For it was

France and not Britain who had treaty obligations to the Czechs. As in 1914 therefore a guarantee to France was the touchstone of our intentions. On the 11th September foreign journalists summoned to the Foreign Office for "an authoritative statement" on British policy were told, "Great Britain could not stand aside from a general conflict in which the integrity of France might be menaced." Chamberlain at the same time was speaking to the British Press of the "probability in certain eventualities of this country going to the assistance of France." That same afternoon Eden had an hour's talk with Halifax at the Foreign Office and the next day to coincide with Hitler's frantic Nuremberg speech which heralded the final showdown a short and sharp letter from Eden was published in *The Times* in support of the Foreign Office statement. While urging settlement by conciliation he re-emphasised that Britain would be at France's side in any emergency threatening her security. "It would be the gravest tragedy if from a misunderstanding of the mind of the British people the world was once again to be plunged into conflict." Hitler, however, had no misunderstanding of the democratic leadership confronting him. Two days later Chamberlain was in Berchtesgaden, the spokesman as much of French as of British appeasement. A guarantee to a France not prepared to fight its own diplomatic battles, was not calculated to deflect the Führer from his aggressive designs. Eden did not intervene publicly again until Parliament's grand inquest on Munich. His contribution to the debate was awaited with special interest, particularly in the light of Duff-Cooper's resignation, to see how far he was prepared to carry his known aversion to Chamberlain's diplomatic principles and practices and to act as spokesman for the latest sense of shame both within and outside Parliament.

He rose to "express his conviction" to the House and the nation, and "for what it may be worth, to offer such suggestions for the future."

Although the speech was marked by the deep disquiet which all responsible people felt at that time, its tone was notably

moderate. If Eden was privately moved to any passion, whether of indignation or of humiliation, he did not think it proper to give vent to such feelings in public. Rather his attitude appeared to be to accept the *fait accompli*, and to face the implications for the future. "It does not seem to me," he said, "that it is so important to consider whether we should praise or blame those proposals as it is to examine what the conditions were that caused the British Government to press such proposals on a friendly nation, and to consider once more what steps we are to take now to see that we do not have to play so unpleasing a role again."

He showed grave anxiety about the future of Czechoslovakia, the national security of which he knew to be imperilled. He pleaded strongly for more speedy rearmament at home, and for a united national effort. But on the whole, the speech did nothing to enhance his influence with the protagonists or opponents of Munich. It is clear that while his decision to intervene was based on a right instinct, he was still too much inhibited by his desire not to embarrass his former colleagues by outspoken criticism, and the result was accordingly lacking in vigour and effectiveness.

He would perhaps have reacted more strongly if he could have known that a mere ten days after Munich Hitler with unparalleled arrogance was to make the maintenance of good relations with Germany conditional upon the continuation in office of Britain's existing leadership. Should Eden, Churchill or Duff-Cooper come into power, the result, declared the Führer, would inevitably be war with the Reich.

A fortnight later at Southampton, Eden enunciated his political creed on somewhat broader lines than he had been able to do when in office or speaking within a Foreign Office context:

"Now when the world outlook is dark," he said, "the nation is beginning to feel once again the need for unity, comradeship and a joint national effort such as animated us in the war years. It is one of the most encouraging features of an otherwise not very encouraging future. There is a real danger that matters

may so drift that England may become a nation where one half does not know how the other half lives. That would be very bad. There is a natural tendency to get used to evils that have been long with us—unemployment, for example. We have to cling tight to our faith, to be clear what are those things we prize so highly that we will not let them go.”

After another somewhat inhibited contribution to the debate on the Anglo-Italian Agreement, in which he made it clear that just as he could not support that policy in February, so he felt unable to support it in the lobby at the division, Eden returned to his best form in the debate on the address on 10th November. Underlining the arguments he had used at Southampton, he called for great sacrifices to meet the dictators’ challenge to democracy, but insisted that we must have a country worth fighting for—a country without distressed areas or an army of unemployed. Could we meet the challenge, he asked, or must we go on living from hand to mouth, wasting our substance without an ordered plan, spending much and achieving little? The drive for munitions and the drive for housing must go side by side. “How could the national unity be realised unless made on behalf of an England that was free and united, an England of equal opportunity for all, regardless of class or creed, an England in which comradeship was the spirit of the nation, an England in which men refuse to rest content while poverty continues to be the lot of many.”

The effect of this speech was immediate and impressive. Eden did not become an orator overnight, but his manner of presenting his case, which had tended to be doctrinaire and to lack robustness, acquired new force. Harold Nicholson commented: “After listening to Mr. Eden’s speech in the House of Commons last night, many of us felt that a new leader had been born.” But there was considerable misunderstanding of his position. Some professed to believe that he was making a bid for the leadership of “the progressive forces” that had so far “failed to act in unity.” “There is no reason,” observed the *Manchester Guardian*, “to imagine anything so heroic,” and a

study of his various speeches, "to say nothing of the political forces out of which such a combination would have to be formed, should quickly dispose of it." Rather he was engaged within the framework of the Conservative Party on what farmers sometimes call a policy of double digging. The procedure was accordingly to stress the need for national unity, for Conservatives to produce it, and finally to imply that certain Conservatives were standing in the way of it. This argument was, as can be seen from the examples cited, reinforced by applying a critical eye not only to the foreign scene but also to the devastations of the home front. Eden's response to Munich was to undertake a tour of the special areas, and trading estates. He was collecting ammunition in order to widen the field of his operations against complacent and inert policy. "Mr. Eden's campaign (for it is hardly less)," the *Manchester Guardian* commented, "is extremely significant. It is not cast in any party mould, and Mr. Eden has no wish to change his party. It springs from the feeling that we have reached a point where the policy of the Government is an inadequate expression of the national will, and has lost the power to evoke a national response."

"If, as seems to be disastrously probable, Mr. Chamberlain's dream of 'appeasement' by his present methods is cruelly dissolved, the country will not be without an alternative working faith which transcends our ineffectual party groupings."

The day before this exercise in speculation appeared in the *News Chronicle* (15th November), thirty-four of Mr. Eden's known supporters had tabled an amendment to the Address demanding a more vigorous social service policy and implying criticism of the Government, particularly on rearmament. But while Labour was perhaps looking with interest towards Eden, he himself had sedulously refrained from overt criticism of his old chief, and from any attempt to organise a revolutionary movement. Perhaps the most impressive demonstration of Eden's mass popularity at this time was a League of Nations' rally at the Queen's Hall at which he was the principal speaker. The demand to hear him was so great that the Queen's Hall was

packed out and a large overflow meeting had to be organised. Eden addressed the assembled multitudes as though delivering a lecture on some abstruse problem in international law. Political and emotional content of the speech was nil and it was left to Lady Violet Bonham Carter to rouse the people. The overwhelming impression left by Eden was that whatever his other public attributes might be, leading crusades or guiding chosen people through wildernesses were not among them.

In December he visited America, at the invitation of the National Association of Manufacturers, and addressed the Annual Congress of American Industry in New York, giving them "the point of view of the average Englishman upon the world problems of today." In the course of his speech he defined democracy as "a university in which we learn from one another. It can never be a barracks, where blind obedience is the first essential," and declared that "the art of government consists in striking a just balance between the claims of the individual and those of the State to which he owes allegiance." It was a forthright statement of vigorous beliefs, well suited to the audience before him.

On his return, he found that the rumours concerning his political future had not died down. Lady Violet Bonham Carter referred to his "implacable fairness" which, one newspaper insisted, had prevented him from exercising any noticeable influence on public opinion since his resignation, and continued, "I cannot help thinking that what I would prefer to call his tepid impartiality is due to a not unnatural human desire to leave open the door for a return to office."

There were deeper and more drastic reasons for restraint on the home front. On 15th March, Hitler's legions marched into Prague, thereby converting the Munich agreement within six months of signature into yet another scrap of paper. A week later they had annexed Memel. On 31st March, Britain had made the fateful guarantee to Poland. Appeasement had suffered sudden death and in the process there was neither time nor opportunity for post mortems.

Nonetheless the darkening scene and the new situation created by it caused widespread speculation about Eden's return to office and power. On 27th March, the *Evening Standard* reported in revealing and characteristic Beaverbrookese: "The air is filled with political rumours. Some say that Mr. Chamberlain will resign, others that Mr. Eden will be brought back to the Cabinet. A third prediction is for an immediate General Election. Mr. Chamberlain will not resign. At his age men hold on, and this man will certainly do so. Nor will Mr. Eden be brought back. It would be folly to include him in the Cabinet until the Italian position has been clarified. For Mr. Eden is even more distrusted in Italy than he is in Germany."

Ten days later, "the Italian position" was "clarified" to the extent that Mussolini had seen fit to invade Albania without warning or provocation on Good Friday. Whatever the dictators or Beaverbrook might think there was certainly a considerable and growing volume of opinion in this country in favour of the "folly" of recalling both Eden and Churchill. Eden's popularity was, indeed, at its zenith. A poll held during April by the British Institute of Public Opinion showed Eden with a clear majority over all other possible candidates "if Mr. Chamberlain retires." He received 38 per cent of the votes, the nearest being Halifax and Churchill, who each received 7 per cent.

In the same month, having offered his services to the War Office in any capacity, Eden was gazetted a major in the Rangers, a London territorial battalion forming part of the King's Royal Rifle Corps, the regiment in which he had served with such distinction in the 1914-1918 war. This was the unit with which he went to camp in August, and the photographs which the Press then carried of him, in uniform and under canvas, served to confirm public confidence in his character and judgment.

On 10th May, when the Prime Minister reported progress to the House on negotiations with Russia, Eden re-emphasised his belief that it was urgent to secure an understanding among

Britain, France and Soviet Russia. Churchill reveals that in the following month Eden volunteered to visit Moscow again—he was, it will be remembered, the only British statesman with any first-hand knowledge of Stalin and the Kremlin. “A renewed effort to come to an arrangement with Soviet Russia,” writes Mr. Churchill, “was made by the British and French Governments. It was decided to send a special envoy to Moscow. Mr. Eden, who had made useful contacts with Stalin some years before, volunteered to go. This generous offer was declined by the Prime Minister. Instead on 12th June, Mr. Strang, an able official but without any special standing outside the Foreign Office, was entrusted with this momentous mission.”

Eden was now regularly taking part in foreign affairs debates, and appearing at international gatherings. In June, for instance, he went to Paris for *Les Conférences des Ambassadeurs*, and spoke twice in French, once with M. Paul Reynaud and once with M. Herriot in the chair. In July he spoke in the House of Commons on the Far Eastern situation, and referred again to the hoped-for agreement with Russia: “These negotiations with Russia are always being forecast either in this country or in Paris as just about to finish but they never seem quite to reach their end. Indeed in his connection I am reminded of La Rochefoucauld’s definition of love and ghosts—everybody is always talking about it but nobody has ever seen it.” A month later, recalled with Parliament on 24th August from his territorial camp, he spoke on the Emergency Powers Bill. “There are many things that could be done,” he said. “I think there is another danger, and not having the responsibility of office I do not see why I should not state it. It is possible that there are at this moment many people in Germany who believe that in the event of hostilities with Poland they may in a few short weeks or months obtain their military objectives in the East, and that, having done that, they appear to believe that we should take no further interest in the matter. If there are any who really think that, they are making the greatest error in history.”

CHAPTER 22

WAR MINISTER

THE RESPONSIBILITY of office," was very soon to be Eden's once more. On 3rd September with the formal declaration of war the Government was at once reconstituted from the resources of its own official supporters—the Labour and Liberal Parties having decided for the time being that the national interest was best served by their remaining in opposition. Accordingly Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty, and Eden, Secretary of State for the Dominions without a seat in the War Cabinet, but with the privilege of attending it constantly for consultation. On 11th September, the British Expeditionary Force arrived in France, and on the same evening Eden broadcast to the Empire. In it he returned to the point which he had made in the House of Commons a fortnight earlier: "Let there be no mistake about this. Our determination to see this war through to the end is unshaken. We must make it clear to the Nazi leaders and, if we can, to the German people that this country—as the Prime Minister said—has not gone to war about the fate of a far-away city in a foreign land. We have decided to fight to show that aggression does not pay, and the German people must realise that this country means to go on fighting until that goal is reached."

It is beyond the scope and purpose of this narrative to recapitulate the history of the momentous political and military events of the Second World War. Eden was from the outset engaged in the framing and direction of British policy at the highest level. As the war unfolded so did his influence and responsibilities expand. The "phony" war or "twilight" war as Churchill has preferred to christen it—lingered on throughout the winter and early spring of 1939-40. In October, Eden

received the Dominion Ministers who had come to London for a conference, and broadcast a message of welcome to them. Later he accompanied the Ministers on a tour of the British and French fronts in France.

In the following February he was again overseas, meeting the Australian and New Zealand troops who had just disembarked at Suez, having welcomed the first wave of Canadian forces to reach Britain. In March, the *Manchester Guardian* was writing: "Mr. Anthony Eden is very popular with the soldiers of the Canadian Army. When he visited the men's mess of one of the regiments in training he received one of the greatest ovations ever given to an official visitor to the Canadian forces. It was electrifying." His work was, of course, of first importance, but it was not spectacular. When he left the Dominions Secretaryship in May, 1940, the broad lines of Commonwealth co-operation had been laid down; military units from the Dominions had already reached their stations; in the naval sphere, "each one of the Dominions," as he told the House of Commons as early as 6th December, 1939, "had made the whole of its naval resources available to work in co-operation with the Admiralty," and a ship of the New Zealand Division, *Achilles*, had taken part in the battle of the River Plate; the great Empire Air Training Scheme had been conceived and was in operation. These are sound achievements, though it is arguable that a less gifted statesman and administrator might have been able to show the same results, and that Chamberlain had not given him a part to play which could provide scope for his talents and experience.

Meanwhile, on 9th April, Germany occupied Denmark and invaded Norway. British troops also landed in Norway almost a week later and the brief campaign began which was to lead to disaster and as a result the downfall of the Government. Eden had no occasion to intervene in the dramatic Norway debate in which Amery quoted Cromwell's ruthless words to the Long Parliament: "Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God go!" And Lloyd George in response to the

Prime Minister's appeal to his friends and plea for sacrifice called upon Chamberlain himself to sacrifice his Seals of Office. The Government could not survive attack from so many flanks.

Germany had already swept into Belgium and Holland when Chamberlain resigned, and Winston Churchill entered on the great premiership with which his fame will be linked for all time. He had promised to let the King have, before midnight, the names of five key ministers, and he "had already made up his mind who they would be." Among them was that of Anthony Eden, who at the age of forty-five became Secretary of State for War.

He held this office for a period of rather more than six months. They were months which saw the defeat of France, and Britain standing alone to defy the Nazi-Fascist threat to civilisation. They saw also the defeat of Hitler's pre-invasion onslaught on Britain in the air, and our first successes in what was to prove the protracted battle of North Africa and the Mediterranean. Such harassing and anxious moments are hardly the periods in which great reputations are made by War Ministers—indeed, it is doubtful if this particular political appointment has ever led in British history to spectacular distinction. In particular under Churchill the Service Departments in fact and in theory were subordinated to the techniques he applied for controlling the higher direction of the war. In his capacity as Minister of Defence without a fully equipped Ministry or Department the Service Ministries themselves became the instruments of his co-ordinating will. The system he developed helped to ensure that there was no repetition of the military and political clashes which so distracted and hampered Lloyd George's premiership in World War I.

The first necessity was to organise home defence against the imminent threat of invasion. Eden had already persuaded the War Cabinet of the need to form the Local Defence Volunteers, and on 14th May he broadcast an appeal to the nation to join this body. In the end it was Churchill himself, with his unrivalled instinct for popular psychology, who found the title by

which the L.D.V. finally came to be known. In July he minuted to Eden: "I don't think much of the name 'Local Defence Volunteers' for your very large new force. The word 'local' is uninspiring. Mr. Herbert Morrison suggested to me today the title 'Civic Guard,' but I think 'Home Guard' would be better." And Home Guard they became—but the credit for initiating the force still rests with Eden.

To Churchill himself belongs the stern decision that Calais had to be held to the last gasp, and not relieved, in order that the Dunkirk evacuation should have a real chance of success. Eden with Ironside, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, acquiesced in this decision, which on personal grounds was particularly painful for him to accept. As Churchill writes: "The final decision not to relieve the garrison was taken on the evening of 26th May. Until then the destroyers were held ready. Eden and Ironside were with me at the Admiralty. We three came out from dinner and at 9:00 P.M. did the deed. It involved Eden's own regiment, in which he had long served and fought in the previous struggle. One has to eat and drink in war, but I could not help feeling physically sick as we afterwards sat silent at the table."

Another hard and crucial decision was taken in mid-July, when Eden pressed on the Prime Minister that General Brooke should be appointed to the command of the Home Forces in place of Ironside. Churchill was quick to see the justice and value of this recommendation. In the event General Brooke was in command of the Home Forces for nearly a year and a half, and then served as Chief of the Imperial General Staff throughout the remainder of the war, a post in which he was to render such signal service to Allied strategy.

The question of the Commandos, which arose in September, illustrates the kind of difficulty which a War Secretary must expect to face. There had been much opposition to the establishment of this special force among high-ranking regular soldiers, and in an illuminating minute addressed to Eden, the Prime Minister wrote on 8th September, 1940: "I hope you will

make sure that when you give an order it is obeyed with promptness. Perhaps you could explain to me what has happened to prevent your decision being made effective. In my experience of Service departments, which is a long one, there is always a danger that anything contrary to Service prejudices will be obstructed and delayed by officers of the second grade in the machine. The way to deal with this is to make signal examples of one or two. When this becomes known you get better service afterwards." It would be invidious to probe too deeply into any action that the Secretary of State may have taken as a result of this minute. The work of the Commandos in the subsequent history of the war is too well known, and too well appreciated by all branches of the Service, to require further comment.

Eden's biggest tasks and heaviest responsibility during his time as War Secretary came when in October, 1940, Churchill decided that he was the man to go to the Middle East and assess by personal inspection the exact position and potentialities in Egypt and North Africa generally. The Prime Minister was particularly worried about the "waste" of regular troops in police duty; the "general slackness" of the Middle East Command in concentrating troops for battle; there was also grave concern about Malta. Being "in such close agreement with the Secretary of State for War," he felt "the need for having our views put forward on the spot instead of through endless telegrams." Eden, delighted with the scope of his mission, reached Cairo on 15th October, and immediately held "searching discussions with both Wavell and Maitland Wilson. He was anxious to establish what could be done by our forces, supposing that the anticipated Italian attack did not come off, and it was in reply to this enquiry that the generals first spoke of their own plans for an offensive. He was informed, too, of the importance of infantry tanks ("Matildas") in desert operations, and informed the Prime Minister of this. Churchill answered: "I have read all your telegrams with deepest interest and realisation of the value of your visit. We are considering how to meet your needs.

Meanwhile continue to master the local situation. Do not hurry your return."

On 28th October, the day that Mussolini invaded Greece, both Wavell and Eden were in Khartoum, conferring with General Smuts. Two days later, our troops occupied Suda Bay, and Crete came into the forefront of the picture. The Prime Minister was of the opinion that "the Greek situation must now be held to dominate all others," and had urged Eden to examine the whole problem with Wavell, and not to hesitate "to make proposal for action on a large scale (in Crete) at the expense of other sectors."

The fact was, of course, that Eden was by now in possession of information that was unknown to the Premier. Churchill and his colleagues at home had been left under the impression that Wavell and Wilson were wedded to waiting for a defensive battle at Mersa Matruh. This was due to the secrecy which the two generals had felt it necessary to impose, and Eden was begged not to send any telegram on the subject, but to wait till he could convey his information verbally.

On 1st November, Eden had telegraphed: "We cannot from Middle East Forces send sufficient air or land reinforcements to have any decisive influence upon course of fighting in Greece. To send such forces from here, or to divert reinforcements now on their way or approved, would imperil our whole position in the Middle East and *jeopardise plans for an offensive now being laid in more than one theatre.*" This message was certainly a trifle cryptic, and on the 3rd Churchill was again urging Eden to "grasp the situation firmly," and the abandonment of "negative and passive policies." The opportunity, he insisted, must be seized. "Safety first," he characteristically added, "is the road to ruin in war. Send me your proposals at earliest or say you have none to make."

During this first week in November, Eden was clamouring to return, and on 8th November he was back home. "He brought with him," says Mr. Churchill, "the carefully guarded secret which I wished I had known earlier." It was unfolded to a

"select circle," including the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and General Ismay, and consisted, as is now common knowledge, of the famous operation "Compass," planned by Wilson and Wavell, which envisaged an allied attack on Graziani's Army (about 80,000 strong), which had crossed the Egyptian frontier and was spread out on a fifty mile front in a series of fortified camps, separated by wide distances, not mutually supporting, and with no depth in the system. The plan involved a serious risk, but the prize—Graziani's Army—was, as the event proved, well worth the hazard.

"Here was the deadly secret which the generals had talked over with their Secretary of State," writes Mr. Churchill. "This was what they had not wished to telegraph. We were all delighted. I purred like six cats."

The desert attack, the prospect of which had put the Prime Minister in such a happy mood of feline tranquillity, was launched on 6th December, and by early in the New Year "the great Italian Army which had hoped to conquer Egypt scarcely existed as a military force." But by then Eden had entered upon his second term of office as Foreign Secretary.

CHAPTER 23

CHURCHILL'S CHOSEN INSTRUMENT

ON 12th December, 1940, Lord Lothian, British Ambassador in Washington, died, and Lord Halifax was appointed to succeed him. "I had no doubt," writes Churchill, "who should fill the vacancy at the Foreign Office. On all the great issues of the past four years I had dwelt in close agreement with Anthony Eden. . . . Together we had abstained from the vote on Munich. Together we had resisted the party pressures brought to bear upon us in our constituencies during the winter of that melancholy year. We had been united in thought and sentiment at the outbreak of the war and as colleagues during its progress.

"The greater part of Eden's public life had been devoted to the study of foreign affairs. He had held the splendid office of Foreign Secretary with distinction, and had resigned it when only forty-two years of age for reasons which are retrospect and at this time (1949) viewed with the approval of all parties in the State. He had played a fine part as Secretary of State for War during this terrific year, and his conduct of Army affairs had brought us very close together. We thought alike, even without consultation, on a very great number of practical issues as they arose from day to day. I looked forward to an agreeable and harmonious comradeship between the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, and this hope was certainly fulfilled during the four and a half years of war and policy which lay before us. Eden was sorry to leave the War Office, in all the stress and excitements of which he was absorbed; but he returned to the Foreign Office like a man going home."

This is a very remarkable tribute from the man of all others

who is most qualified to speak, and whose judgment of men and affairs carries special weight. It sets a seal upon Eden's career up to that point, and endorses the part which he was to play during the next critical years. In writing thus generously of his colleague, Winston Churchill is writing with the pen of History. Yet, in all that follows, it will be well to remember that, inspiring as was the Prime Minister's leadership and vast as was his experience of public affairs and his reputation overseas, he can have been no easy master to serve. The guiding hand which the Prime Minister liked to keep on the reins of all departments vital to the war effort was sometimes a heavy one, and though Eden himself would be the first to deny that Churchill acted as "his own Foreign Secretary," there inevitably came times—indeed, the conduct of the war demanded it—when the initiative in the handling of foreign relations passed across Downing Street from the Foreign Office to No. 10. The problem would have been much more acute but for that genuine and deep harmony between the two men to which Churchill himself draws our attention.

The ministerial changes announced at the same time included the appointment of David Margesson, formerly Conservative Chief Whip, to the War Office, and that of Cranborne, who still retained the Dominions Secretaryship, as spokesman for foreign affairs in the House of Lords. Thus was re-established the original happy partnership which had only been disrupted by the resignation of both partners in 1938. R. A. Butler, who had already laid the foundations of his considerable reputation as Foreign Under-Secretary, retained that post.

But Eden was to carry additional burdens. From 1942 to 1945 he was Leader of the House of Commons. By 1945 he had paid two war-time visits to Moscow. The first took place in 1941, to lay the groundwork for a twenty-year Russo-British mutual assistance agreement, and the second to sign the Moscow Three-Power agreement. Throughout he accompanied the Prime Minister to great conferences which shaped the high strategy of the war. Casablanca, Quebec, Cairo, Teheran and

Yalta. These were momentous missions, the political and military implications of which are still being analysed and debated. Before recounting Eden's part in these historic developments it is pleasant to recall an intimate personal impression of the Foreign Secretary provided by that great United States Ambassador and friend of embattled Britain, John G. Winant, in his short but moving record of those days which he called *A Letter from Grosvenor Square*.

"When I reached London in 1941, Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was in the Middle East. I reported to Washington that I had missed his help. We had much in common. We had served as soldiers in the last war in the Allied Armies. Many of our friends fell in France. We had each in our own country supported the League of Nations from its inception. We had worked in the pre-war days in the international field to maintain the rule of law and social justice among nations. When we met in May, Great Britain was fighting for her life, the Western Front was smashed, and, in the free France of Lafayette and Foch, the tricolor had been torn down and the swastika flew over a conquered Europe.

"Eden had been one of the few to understand and resist Mussolini. . . . The weakness of an appeasement-minded government had allowed Hitler and Mussolini to drive him from public office. He, Cranborne and Churchill, and a few others who represented the minority opinion, were swept aside as warmongers; warmongers because they had not forgotten the causes for which men had fought and died in the 1914 war. . . .

"The reputation of a statesman outside his own country is often limited, nor does it always reflect a true picture of a man's worth. Many people at home liked Eden because he was good-looking, well dressed, conservative and a Britisher who frankly liked the United States. I found him a hard-working, unafraid Englishman who had spent his life in the service of his country. He was one of the best trained diplomats I have ever met. He had no use for shoddy politics whether at home or abroad. His views and his judgment on public affairs were based on knowl-

edge of the voluminous despatches on foreign relations and military affairs that passed his desk. No one I know carried a heavier load in the war. . . . He used his command of foreign relations and his leadership in the Commons, with his knowledge of the military situation, to broaden policy, to strengthen understanding, to effect co-ordination, and to bring about unity of action.

"The personal relationship between the Prime Minister and Anthony Eden was as close and real as President Roosevelt's friendship for Harry Hopkins. Roosevelt and Churchill, each a great leader singleminded in serving his country, understood that most men who crossed their doorsteps wanted something. Eden and Hopkins wanted nothing beyond being useful and loyal to a cause and a leader. They both had the courage to tell the truth, whether it was wanted or unwanted, to the men under whom they served. If this had been all they did the people of both countries would still owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

"Eden was always on call, both day and night. He worked in the Foreign Office building. It was a great stone structure, ornate, with high ceilings, long corridors and with a formal staircase. Broken windows, which had been filled in with cloth, as well as imperfect lighting, gave a sense of darkness and dreariness to the place. It had few of the advantages of a modern structure and yet, like some old-fashioned concerns, it had stood the test of time. It was an efficient workshop because it was staffed with competent people. . . . The Foreign Secretary's personal office was on the north-eastern corner of the building, looking out on St. James's Park and across on to the new Admiralty building. It was a spacious room, cold in winter but light and cheery, well furnished and easily adapted for conference use. . . .

"Like all other British Ministers, Eden lived on the job. He and his wife occupied a small apartment which had been an office on the top floor of the Foreign Office building. Twice it was blasted by bomb explosion, and the windows blown in. Luckily there was no one in at either time.

"We had an odd informal relationship, based not only on personal friendship but also on our regard for each other's country and for our own. We both got satisfaction from working together for measures and actions that were of mutual advantage to both countries. In doing the day's work we tried to drop out the non-essentials of the usual diplomatic interchange and yet we were both exact in preparing formal agreements.

"We used to go down occasionally on a Sunday to his country house in Sussex. It was not different from London as far as the work load was concerned, and we had the same long hours hooked up to a 'scrambler' telephone, but instead of a room and a desk we used to go out into the garden. I have never known anyone who cared more about flowers or vegetables or fruit trees, or wind blowing across wheatfields, or the green pastures which marked out the Sussex Downs. We used to get our fun weeding the garden. We would put our despatch boxes at either end, and when we had completed a row we would do penance by reading messages and writing the necessary replies. Then we would start again our menial task, each in some subconscious fashion trying to find a sense of lasting values in the good earth.

"I liked Eden. I found him simple, truthful, and courageous. In those years before the United States became engaged in the war, he had two obsessions which I shared. He was determined, whatever the cost, not to involve his country in secret treaties, and never to repeat the British mistake in the last war when they made concessions to the Arabs which ran counter to their agreements under the Balfour Declaration. He never did. His entire foreign policy was based upon a high conception of moral right."

This is indeed high tribute from a discerning, sensitive eyewitness. The respect was mutual; for welcoming him as Ambassador Eden declared, "He cares much for his work, little for Party politics, not at all for himself. Humanity is the key to Mr. Winant's lifework."

Two events in the year 1941 are outstanding in Eden's bud-

get of responsibility—his visit to the Middle East, and his visit to Moscow. Neither of them can be said to have resulted in unqualified success—but at this stage of the war Britain was barely doing more than hold her own; and diplomatic initiative was directly dependent upon military results and strategic prospects.

When Eden left for his Middle East mission within a couple of months of becoming Foreign Secretary, he was given wider discretion on the spot by the Prime Minister and Cabinet. His principal object was to be the dispatch of speedy succour to Greece, and for this purpose he was to "initiate any action he might think necessary" with the Commander in Chief, Middle East, with the Egyptian Government, and with the Governments of Greece, Jugoslavia and Turkey. He was accompanied by Sir John Dill, the Chief of the Imperial Staff, who was to advise on the military aspect. Eden was to "address himself to the problem of securing the highest form of war economies throughout the Middle East," and even to advise the Government on the selection of commanders for all the different purposes in view. He was, in short, "to gather together all the threads and propose continuously the best solutions for our difficulties, and not to be deterred from acting upon his own authority if the urgency was too great to allow reference home."

Eden quickly came to the conclusion, after his initial conferences with Dill and the three Commanders in Chief—Wavell, Cunningham and Longmore—at Cairo, that help should be sent to Greece, and the matter was settled after he had paid a flying visit to the Greek King and his Government at Athens. Meanwhile he had little success in his negotiations with the Turks, who pointed out, not unreasonably, that the forces with which Britain could provide her were insufficient to make any real difference in a battle. He did, however, obtain an undertaking that Turkey would in any event enter the war at some stage. The Chiefs of Staff at home were still doubtful about the wisdom of intervention in Greece, but Eden had con-

vinced the Cabinet, and on 14th March, the Prime Minister telegraphed to him, suggesting that he should remain where he was for a time: "No one but you can combine and concert the momentous policy which you have pressed upon us and which we have adopted."

At the end of March came the bloodless revolution in Yugoslavia. Eden was already on his way home when the news of this event reached London, and again the Prime Minister urged him to return for the present to Cairo. Thus it happened that he was still in the Middle East when Rommel launched his attack, and he had to witness the loss of all that had been gained by the original British drive in the preparation for which he had shared during his previous mission. He finally left for home in early April, after a conference at which it had been decided that Wavell would attempt to hold Tobruk, if possible. It cannot have been a very encouraging home-coming either for the Foreign Secretary or for the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Yet it is clear that the right decisions had been taken, and Churchill records that although the Greek adventure ended in disaster, "there is no doubt that the Mussolini-Hitler crime of over-running Greece, and our effort to stand against tyranny and save what we could from its claws, appealed profoundly to the people of the United States, and above all to the great man who led them." In global war the sequence of cause and effect is not always easy to follow and cannot be made manifest to the principal actors at the time. Resistance to one Axis diversion in the Balkans admittedly ending in local disaster was instrumental in directing Hitler from his major strategic purpose. It seems to have delayed the initial blitzkrieg invasion of Russia by some six weeks—a big enough margin to turn the scales against the chance of occupying Moscow before the full rigours of the Russian winter set in. Such are the mighty consequences that can flow from a single bold decision taken in a minor sector of the conflict. In submitting to Parliament that support for Greece was politically and militarily the right decision, Eden quoted Wolfe's dictum that "War is an option of difficulties,"

adding that this was certainly so "until our strength in every arm, in every theatre is so great that it makes the odds all even."

At 4:00 A.M. on 22nd June, Ribbentrop delivered a formal declaration of war to the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, and for the next four years—and much longer—the major preoccupations of the British Foreign Secretary were to be governed by the vast implications of the sudden and forced contacts with the West into which Russia was thus precipitated. Even that minimum of understanding and co-operation with Stalin which was vitally necessary to the joint prosecution of the war seemed almost impossible to obtain in those early months. Churchill's memoirs show how firmness and patience eventually triumphed—though at considerable cost—and his account of British relations with the Russian leader continuously reveal suspicion, reluctance and delay on the part of Moscow, alternating with violent demands for impossible military adventures or political concessions. It was after contemplating "the almost hysterical note of Stalin's message about Finland" that the Prime Minister decided to offer to send Eden to Moscow, accompanied by high military and other experts, in order to undertake a general review of the war in both its military and general aspects and to put the alliance, if possible, on a formal and written treaty basis.

Stalin replied on 23rd November, in a much calmer tone, warmly welcoming the suggestion, and Eden duly set out from Scapa Flow. He left on the night of 7th-8th December, perhaps the most dramatic moment of the war. For as he set out the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was actually breaking on the British Government. At the same time the German guns had penetrated within twelve miles of Moscow. The Prime Minister having decided that his "mission was all the more important in consequence of the new explosion," instructed the Foreign Secretary to continue his voyage, and promised to keep him closely informed of events. "There was," he grimly adds, "plenty to tell." Meanwhile Churchill himself

set out for the United States to meet President Roosevelt, now no longer the friendly neutral but the mighty Ally commanding the greatest resources for the achievement of total victory the world had ever known.

On his return, Eden summarised the result of his mission in a full despatch, dated 5th January, 1942. Significantly enough the primary theme was not the overwhelming immediate crisis. "At my first conversation with M. Stalin and M. Molotov on 16th December," he writes, "M. Stalin set out in some detail what he considered should be the post-war territorial frontiers in Europe and in particular his ideas regarding the treatment of Germany. . . .

"In the course of this first conversation M. Stalin . . . showed interest in a post-war military alliance between the 'democratic countries,' and stated that the Soviet Union had no objection to certain countries of Europe entering into federal relationship, if they so desired. . . .

"In the second conversation on December 17th, M. Stalin pressed for the immediate recognition by His Majesty's Government of the future frontiers of the U.S.S.R. more particularly in regard to the inclusion within the U.S.S.R. of the Baltic States and the restoration of the Finnish-Soviet frontier. He made the conclusion of any Anglo-Soviet agreement dependent on agreement on this point. . . ."

Mr. Churchill comments: "In the forefront of the Russian claims was the request that the Baltic States, which Russia had subjugated at the beginning of the war, should be fully incorporated in the Soviet Union. There were many other conditions about Russian imperial expansion, coupled with fierce appeals for unlimited supplies and impossible military action. As soon as I read the telegrams I reacted violently against the absorption of the Baltic States."

This question was, indeed, the stumbling-block, and it led Robert Sherwood to comment, in his *The White House Papers of Harry Hopkins*, that Eden's mission had been largely fruitless. Events were to prove that this was not the case. As evi-

dence of Stalin's deep and long term calculations the encounter was highly revealing; moreover the Foreign Secretary's own account of the ending of his talks shows a certain hopefulness for the immediate future: "We took leave of one another in a very friendly atmosphere. After my explanations M. Stalin seemed fully to understand our inability to create a second front in Europe at the present time. He showed considerable interest in the progress of our Libyan offensive. . . . He did not consider that he was yet strong enough to continue the campaign against Germany and also to provoke hostilities with Japan. . . ."

The Russian negotiations could not, of course, and did not end there. In May, 1942, Molotov came to London with a view to negotiating a treaty of alliance, and Eden was in charge of the discussions, which began at the Foreign Office on 21st May. Churchill confesses that his feeling of intransigence on the question of the Baltic States had undergone a certain modification during the months which had intervened, since he did not feel "that this moral position could be physically maintained. In a deadly struggle," he continues, "it is not right to assume more burdens than those who are fighting for a great cause can bear. My feelings about the Baltic States were, and are unaltered; but I felt that I could not carry them farther forward at this time."

Happily the issue was not pressed, and it was Eden himself who found a formula acceptable to the Russians, on the basis of substituting for a territorial agreement a general and public treaty of alliance for twenty years, omitting all reference to frontiers. Molotov showed signs of giving way, and requested permission from Stalin to negotiate on the basis of Eden's draft. Two days later the treaty, without any territorial provisions, was signed. "This was a great relief to me," comments Churchill, "and a far better solution than I had dared hope. Eden showed much skill in the timing of his suggestion."

About this time—June, 1942—the Prime Minister decided to fly to the United States for his second visit to Roosevelt. The

journey was the occasion for a very significant development in the career of Anthony Eden.

"It is not customary," writes Churchill, "for a Prime Minister to advise the Sovereign officially upon his successor unless he is asked to do so. As it was war-time, I sent the King, in response to a request he had made to me in conversation at our last weekly interview, the following letter:

" 'In case of my death on this journey I am about to undertake, I avail myself of Your Majesty's gracious permission to advise that you should entrust the formation of a new Government to Mr. Anthony Eden, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who is in my mind the outstanding Minister in the largest political party in the House of Commons and in the National Government over which I have the honour to preside, and who, I am sure, will be found capable of conducting Your Majesty's affairs with the resolution, experience and capacity which these grievous times require.' "

Only four months before, Beaverbrook had written to Churchill, on the subject of Cabinet reconstruction: "The War Cabinet should consist of Bevin, the strongest man in the present Cabinet; Eden, the most popular member of the Cabinet; and Attlee, the leader of the Socialist Party. The other members should be wiped out!"

Eden's future was in fact taking definite shape. In November he had agreed to assume the leadership of the House of Commons, in addition to the Foreign Office, from Sir Stafford Cripps, on the latter's departure from the War Cabinet. Cripps had not proved temperamentally suited to this particular role. Of an austere nature, and coming rather late in life to the Parliamentary scene, he tended to treat members in the fashion of a schoolmaster dealing with backward pupils; Eden was altogether a better House of Commons man, more sensitive to the idiom and idiosyncrasies of Westminster.

He was respected and admired at home and abroad. He was deep in the confidence of the Prime Minister, and for the first time, Elijah had definitely made a proffer of his mantle.

CHAPTER 24

GRAND ALLIES

THE YEAR 1943 was one of immense activity, not only for Eden, but for all the Allied leaders—indeed, for the whole Western World. For in that year the tide of war began to turn against the Axis. While plans for bringing the war to “total victory” and unconditional surrender were the first priority, there was also the urgent need to start laying the foundations for the peace that was to follow. It was, for Eden, a time of travel and conference. In March he was in America, holding vital discussions with President Roosevelt. In May he visited Algiers, helping Churchill to supervise the Sicilian and Italian landings—operations to which Churchill attached high strategic importance. Later came the Quebec and Moscow Conferences and the year closed with those of Cairo and Teheran. This was a phase, therefore, of crushing responsibilities and far-reaching decision, but at the same time the atmosphere was one of hope with military victory on the horizon, and the prospects for the political future no more than slightly dimmed as yet by the attitude of Russia.

Eden's March visit to Washington was Churchill's idea. The Prime Minister wished him “to establish intimate personal relations with the President,” and Roosevelt cordially agreed to receive him. Within less than a week of the Foreign Secretary's arrival, Roosevelt was writing his impressions to Churchill: “Anthony has spent three evenings with me. He is a grand fellow, and we are talking everything from Ruthenia to the production of peanuts. It is an interesting fact that we seem to agree on about 95 per cent of all the subjects—not a bad average. He seems to think that you will manage rather well with the Leadership [of the House of Commons, which Churchill

had taken over personally during Eden's absence], but both of us are concerned over what you will do with the Foreign Office. We fear that he will not recognise it when he gets back." The "intimate personal relations" seem to have been established without difficulty—although that kind of informal badinage was characteristic of the President. It is perhaps more important to study the scope of these discussions, the area over which the 95 per cent agreement was spread, and the nature of the remaining 5 per cent. Sherwood, in *The White House Papers*, one of the great source books of our time, gives a very full account of what took place.

According to Winant, who sent a minute to this effect to the President, Eden's mission was to be "limited to the most effective method of preparing for meetings between the governments of all the United Nations to consider questions arising out of the war." This, as Sherwood comments, would seem to be an extremely broad limitation, and in fact the President and the Foreign Secretary's conversations covered "a vast variety of subjects in the political conduct of the war and in the construction of the hoped-for post-war world."

Hopkins took extensive notes of the views on post-war geographical problems expressed by Eden and Roosevelt at a small dinner-party on 15th March. The most pressing of these concerned Russia's aspirations. Eden gave an outline of what he thought Russia would demand, beginning with the absorption of the Baltic States. Roosevelt said that such a demand would meet with much opposition in both the U.S.A. and Britain, but agreed that with Russia in actual possession it would be difficult to do anything about it. He considered that concession over the Baltic States might be made a bargaining counter for Russian concessions elsewhere. So far as Poland was concerned, Eden reported that General Sikorsky and his London Government were being "very difficult about their aspirations," in the belief that both Russia and Germany would be worn out after the war, and that Poland might emerge as the strongest State in eastern and central Europe. Russia, in his view, wanted

a "strong and independent Poland," provided that "the right people were running it," and would probably be content to accept the Curzon Line. He and the President agreed that Poland should "probably have East Prussia"; Eden adding that Russia showed signs of agreeing to this, and the President feeling that arrangements should be made to move the Germans out of the area *en masse*. Finland would probably provide the same sort of problem, especially with regard to Hangoe. Eden twice stated his view that the Russians did not want to carry too heavy commitments in Europe at the end of the war, and he therefore believed that Stalin would want the British and American armies present in strength on the Continent.

The talks ranged over nearly every major problem in Europe. They agreed that no real difficulties would arise over Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey or Greece. In discussing Jugoslavia, Roosevelt stated that the Serbs and Croats had nothing in common, and there was no point therefore in prolonging their union. He suggested an independent Serbia, with the Croats under trustees, but Eden, without undue emphasis, made it clear that the British Government were not in favour of the trusteeship principle. They agreed once more on the separation of Austria and Hungary, and Eden said that he thought the Russians would be "pretty arbitrary" about Hungary. Finally they came to Germany, and approved in principle of the dismemberment of the Reich, preferably by encouraging native separatist movements. Eden, who was naturally in a position to take the lead when it came to the difficult art of gauging Stalin's intentions, said that Russia would almost certainly demand that Germany be broken up.

At the end of the evening Hopkins intervened, telling the President that it was important that they should have the frankest kind of talk with Mr. Eden about potential differences between the U.S.A. and the U.K. in Europe, of which at the moment he saw two: (i) the peoples of Serbia and Croatia, and (ii) the problem of what countries, free and otherwise, should be disarmed in Europe. He also felt that it would be useful if

Eden would articulate in his own mind the differences which either the U.S.A. or Great Britain, or both, were likely to have with Russia in Europe. They were to give two more evenings to these discussions, and then tackle the problems of the South-West Pacific, the Far East and Africa, exchanging points of view on such "areas of controversy" as Hong Kong, Malaya and India. It was a formidable programme. Eden left with Hopkins, and said that so far he was satisfied with the progress made, and was much impressed by the President's intimate knowledge of boundaries in Europe.

Cordell Hull was present at the meeting on 17th March, at which Hopkins raised the question of the urgency of agreeing on some policy and some procedure. He said that he thought there was no understanding between Great Britain, Russia and the United States as to which armies would be where and what kind of administration should be developed. Unless they acted promptly and surely, he believed one of two things would happen—either Germany would go Communist, or an out-and-out anarchic state would set in; that, indeed, the same situation might develop in Italy as well, or in any of the countries in Europe. He said he thought it required some formal agreement that the State Department should work out the plan with the British, and whatever was agreed upon between those two Allies should then be discussed with the Russians. The President agreed that this procedure should be followed.

At a further meeting on 22nd March, there was a significant discussion on "total surrender." The President insisted that he wanted no negotiated armistice after the collapse. Hopkins also notes one of the most interesting and bold approaches made by Eden in the whole course of the conferences. "Eden raised the question," he writes, "in a delicate way, as to the President's constitutional powers, during this interim while we were still technically at war with Germany, to agree to forming an independent Austria, for an example. The President replied that he thought he did have the power without reference to the United States Senate—at any rate enough power to make the inde-

pendence of Austria stick. It was clear from Eden's reply that he had some doubt about this. After lunch he told me he thought it a matter of great importance because England, China, Russia and the other United Nations wanted to be sure of the President's power to reach any agreement which would be binding prior to the actual signing of a peace treaty, which treaty, of course, would have to go to the Senate for confirmation." Such a diplomatic move, as from a Foreign Minister to the Head of a State, can only be described as formidable, and the way in which it was received is the best possible evidence of Eden's diplomatic gifts, and of his personal acceptability to Roosevelt.

An outstanding issue within the "5 per cent" of disagreement was China. The President said that he thought that China might become a useful power in the Far East to help police Japan, and that he wanted to strengthen China in every way. Eden was doubtful whether China could stabilise herself sufficiently for such a role and considered she might well have to go through a revolution after the war. He said he "did not like the idea much of the Chinese running up and down the Pacific." How grimly prophetic was Eden's attitude of reserve, and how wide of the mark was Roosevelt's certainty, when he raised the issue of China, as a member of the future Security Council, that in any serious conflict of policy with Russia, China "would undoubtedly line up on our side!"

The organisation of the United Nations after the war came in for general review, together with such specific problems as refugees—and in particular the Jews—colonies, trusteeships and mandated territories. Some of the more urgent strategic questions such as that of shipping were also discussed. There had certainly been no lack of frankness on either side, and the intentions expressed by both the President and the Foreign Secretary were very far-reaching—so much so, that Hopkins with a belated twinge of conscience remarked at one of the last conferences: "I said I thought it would have a very bad effect, both in England and the United States, if the world got the

impression that the United States and England were, together, planning the future of the world without consulting anyone else!" Eden agreed, and said the British were conducting direct conferences on matters that concerned them and Russia, and he assumed that the United States would do the same thing.

On 29th March, Hopkins wrote his final note on the Eden visit following a dinner given by Cordell Hull at the Carlton Hotel: "After dinner Eden and I sat up for a couple of hours reviewing the results of his trip. He, obviously, felt that from his point of view it had been altogether worth while, particularly from the point of view of his having had a chance to get well acquainted with the President, and, second, with Hull. He told me he was going to invite Hull to come to England. While he found Hull a little difficult to talk to, and obsessed with the problem of the Free French, nevertheless he thought that he and Hull did see eye to eye on the major world problems. Eden said he had learned of the importance of Congress, and particularly the Senate, in any post-war discussions, and he had not fully understood the working arrangement between the President and Congress. He found it pretty difficult to envisage the wide separation of the powers of the executive and the legislative branches.

"The President had once or twice urged the British to give up Hong Kong as a gesture of 'good will.' In fact, the President had suggested a number of similar gestures on the part of the British, and Eden drily remarked that he had not heard the President suggest any similar gestures on our own part.

"Eden, obviously, felt he got on extremely well with the President, and I think this is true. The President liked Eden's frankness and admired his wide knowledge of world affairs."

The rest of the "5 per cent" disagreement was concerned, as the last quotation reveals, with the French. Eden had stated the British view that they would greatly prefer to deal with one strong French authority, established in Algiers and representing all possible elements of French opinion. Roosevelt and Hull, according to Sherwood, said that they preferred to keep

the position fluid, and to deal with French individuals. Roosevelt persisted in his belief that no single French authority could be set up by the Allies, and recognised by them, without eventually incurring the bitter resentment of metropolitan France itself.

This was a situation with which Eden was to find himself dealing at first hand very soon after his return to England. In May, Churchill was in North Africa supervising the preliminaries to the Sicily and Italy campaign. He telegraphed to Eden to come out and join him, "so as to make sure we saw eye to eye on the meeting we had arranged between Giraud and de Gaulle, and all our other business." He explained the necessity for Eden's presence in a telegram to the Cabinet dated 29th May: "It seems to me important that Eden should come here for a few days. He is much better fitted than I am to be best man at the Giraud-de Gaulle wedding. He ought to be conscious of the atmosphere and in touch with the actors in what may easily be a serious drama." Eden in fact arrived only in time to bless these nuptials, the first shy contacts having been established in the previous January, after an original refusal by de Gaulle to meet his prospective partner! But Churchill wanted him to advise on the plans for the forthcoming invasion of Italy, and so Eden was present at the second meeting between the Allied leaders—who included Churchill, Brooke, Alexander, Cunningham, Tedder and Ismay for the British, and Eisenhower, Bedell Smith and Marshall for the United States—and was able to give useful advice as to the probable reactions of Turkey if the United Nations succeeded in getting Italy out of the war.

It is interesting to note that in his book entitled, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, Captain Harry C. Butcher comments, under the date 1st June, 1943: "I expressed [the view] that the British, by the presence of the Prime Minister, Eden, and at least one other important personage to follow, are consciously or unconsciously impressing the French and the natives by their traditional method of pomp and pageantry. So far the

Americans have not met the competition." It was also Captain Butcher's view at this time that "de Gaulle is running away with the show as far as Giraud is concerned." (There is no evidence whether this was in accord with Eden's intentions as a match-maker! We may presume that it was not, but at that time the match itself was the important thing.) Eden flew home with Churchill via Gibraltar.

The Prime Minister was in Quebec in August when Eden cabled to him the news of overtures from Marshal Badoglio, but he was in Quebec himself when the first news of Italy's forthcoming unconditional surrender was received in 19th August. There was very little time for rejoicing, and the French issue was still causing concern and disagreement between Great Britain and the United States. On 22nd August, Churchill cabled to Attlee, the Deputy Prime Minister: "Eden and Hull are locked in lengthy discussions. Hull remains completely obdurate about not using the word 'recognition' in respect of the French Committee. We have therefore agreed that they shall publish their document, and we ours and the Canadians theirs, after communicating with Russia and others concerned. Eden has this matter in hand."

In October, after the surrender of Italy had become an accomplished fact, Eden was on his way to Moscow for a Foreign Secretaries' Conference when the Prime Minister had to warn him of the receipt of an "offensive" telegram from Stalin, dealing, among other matters, with the convoys which Britain was sending by the northern route. It was necessary to brief the Foreign Secretary—indeed, to leave the handling of the whole matter to him personally, since the Prime Minister very properly proposed to hand Stalin's offensive message to the Russian Ambassador, informing him that he refused to receive it. It was not an auspicious moment for Eden to arrive in Moscow. Churchill sent him a typically warm-hearted greeting: "I feel so much for you in the bleak Conference, and wish I were with you. You may have full confidence in the strength of the British position on all these questions, and I have every hope that you

will make them feel at once our desire for their friendship and our will-power on essentials. All good luck." In a personal interview with Stalin, Eden explained the position about the convoys, firmly and with dignity. He said that in the circumstances it was not surprising that the Prime Minister had been hurt by his message, and Stalin replied that that had not been intended. The matter was settled, and the convoys were resumed.

The crux of the conference was the invasion of Northern France—operation "Overlord"—for which the Russians were strongly pressing, without taking any heed of their Allies' difficulties or achievements on other fronts. Again Eden had an interview with Stalin and again he was successful in using the tactics of firmness and frankness. "The whole talk," he cabled, "went off surprisingly well. Stalin seemed in excellent humour, and at no point in the evening was there any recrimination about the past or any disposition to ignore real difficulties that face us"—this seems to have been the accustomed strategy of the late Marshal, on the rare occasions when he consented to meet his western Allies face to face. "It is clear however that he expects us to make every effort to stage 'Overlord' at the earliest possible moment, and the confidence he is placing in our word is to me most striking." Eden came away with the impression that the Russians at last seemed genuinely to desire the friendship and goodwill of Britain and the United States. "Your gesture in respect of convoys has made a deep impression," he reported to Churchill. "For the first time in many years Molotov and a number of his colleagues came to dinner at this Embassy tonight. Mikoyan, whose task it is to keep these people informed, was especially eloquent in his tributes to your personal share in the sailing of these convoys." It is not surprising that in a statement to the House of Commons after his return Eden felt able to say "with absolute assurance that the fifteen days' work had brought a new warmth and new confidence into all their dealings with their Soviet friends."

In November took place the Cairo Conference, followed

immediately by the more important conference in Teheran. Eden was present at both, which were primarily concerned with the political and military strategy of the war in Asia, and although his role was necessarily secondary, Churchill makes it clear that he placed great confidence in his Foreign Secretary. "Mr. Eden had now joined us from England," he wrote, "whither he had flown after his discussions in Moscow. His arrival was a great help to me." This was largely because on his way back from Russia he had met the Turkish Foreign Minister and other Turks at Cairo, and had once more pressed upon them the advantages of entering the war on the side of the United Nations. His efforts were unsuccessful, but he was able to give the delegates at Cairo an accurate and up-to-date picture of these talks, and also of the political temperature in Moscow.

At Teheran we have glimpses of Eden sitting on a sofa with Churchill and Stalin, exchanging views on the shape of things to come. On the vexed question of Poland, Churchill tells us, Eden intervened to say that he had been much struck by Stalin's statement that afternoon that the Poles could go as far west as the Oder. He saw hope in that and was much encouraged. "Stalin asked whether we thought he was going to swallow Poland up. Eden said he did not know how much the Russians were going to eat. How much would they leave undigested? Stalin said the Russians did not want anything belonging to other people, although they might have a bite at Germany." Again, we have another glimpse of Eden trying to soothe the ruffled Prime Minister when he was being baited by Stalin, Roosevelt and Elliott Roosevelt on the subject of the post-war shooting of Germans. Finally there is a rather grim picture of Eden, in conference, asking Stalin if by the 1939 frontiers between Russia and Poland he meant the "Ribbentrop-Molotov line"? To this Stalin merely replied: "Call it whatever you like," and Molotov tried to assert that the Curzon Line was identical with the 1939 line of partition, only to be disabused by Eden, who showed him the important differences

on the map. The general picture which emerges from the pages of Mr. Churchill's memoirs is that of a strong man, sure of himself and of his facts, not afraid to challenge the Heads of States so formidable (on the one hand) and so sensitive (on the other) as Stalin and Roosevelt, if he felt that the situation required blunt speaking.

CHAPTER 25

DILEMMAS OF VICTORY

AT THE end of the second conference in Cairo, Churchill fell seriously ill with pneumonia, and it thus became Eden's responsibility to give the House of Commons a résumé of the results obtained at both Cairo and Teheran. The first of these, he said, was that the war would be shortened. "All is now agreed. Every plan is now agreed, and the timing is now agreed, and, in due course, the decisions of the Teheran Conference will be unrolled on the field of battle." Of the possibility of a new international order after the war he spoke enthusiastically—as at that time he well might. "The foundations do exist, and I am truly confident that there is a possibility, and more than a possibility, a desire, among the three Powers for continued co-operation not only during the war, not only in reshaping Europe when the Armistice comes, but also, thereafter, in maintaining in the world an orderly progress and continuing peace. The foundations of that understanding were laid by us in Moscow. They have been confirmed and strengthened in Teheran. We three worked together. We have set our hands to the task, and heavy is our responsibility to ensure that we do not fail."

This was the mood in which Eden, and the country with him, greeted the year 1944, which was just opening. It can be divided, so far as Eden's activity is concerned, into a comparatively quiet or at least sedentary six months until D-Day (6th June), and a renewed pressure of diplomatic activity thereafter, including one visit to Canada and another to Paris.

In March Eden made an important speech on moral principles and foreign affairs to the Free Church Federal Council. It was important not only for its significance at the time, but

also as a guide to Eden's own deepest thoughts on political ethics. "I agree," he said, "with the words of J. Quincy Adams, one of the most sagacious of American statesmen: 'The more of pure moral principle that is carried into the policy of a Government, the wiser and more profound will that policy be.' . . . Just as this moral principle lies at the root of the social structure within any nation, so must it lie at the root of any workable and enduring international system. It is quite true that in the past efforts to apply it have only been partially successful, though they have occasionally succeeded for quite long periods. But this does not mean that such attempts will always fail, and even if they did fail it would still be necessary to pursue the ideal of interdependence, for only thus can we escape from perpetual war and from one nation preying as a wolf upon another."

The Prime Minister on the 24th May referred in the House of Commons to the general agreement there had been as to Eden's "skill and consistency" in the treatment of our foreign affairs. Eden wound up the Debate, and gave the House some general ideas on a world organisation that would, he hoped, come into being at the end of hostilities. The responsibility of any world organisation must, he said, be related to power, and consequently it should be constructed on and around the United States, the British Commonwealth, the Soviet Union and China. All other peace-loving States should come and play their parts in the structure built up on those four. The inclusion of China would seem to represent some modification of the attitude he took up during his global discussions with Roosevelt and may perhaps be regarded as a conscious concession to the President's way of thinking. The world organisation should be flexible; it should grow by practice, and not try straight away to work to a fixed and rigid code or rule. All the powers included in it, great and small, should strive for economic as well as for political collaboration.

One may turn at this point to consider what had been the effect of all this departmental and international work on Eden's

political stock at home. There is no doubt that it stood high in the year 1944. In October the *Manchester Guardian* wrote: "Many of his friends want Mr. Eden to take a short holiday. They point to his heavy labours, particularly during the recess. Certainly of late Mr. Eden had driven himself as hard as any member of the Government, not excepting the Prime Minister. Indeed he has had to do so. The foreign problems he has had to cope with do not wait on anybody's pleasure. They are not White Papers. And now he has the daily leadership of the House of Commons on his hands again. . . . A strange attempt was made behind the scenes a month or two ago to get Mr. Eden to give up the Foreign Secretaryship and concentrate his talents on leading the House. It is to be hoped the new solicitude for his health does not presage a renewal of that pressure."

At the end of August Eden had been acting as Prime Minister pending the return of Churchill from Italy. He had taken charge when Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister, left for Algiers. This was the first time that both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister had been absent from the country at the same time. It was therefore the first time that Eden had been acting Prime Minister, and although he was not called upon to take any decision of major importance, it is a significant enough landmark in his career.

In November the Beaverbrook Press helped to stir up speculation whether Anthony Eden would become the leader of the Conservatives when the time came for Churchill to lay down the burdens of office. Under cover of certain remarks by Malcolm MacDonald a *Sunday Express* correspondent wrote: "Mr. Malcolm MacDonald has been telling the Canadians that he will; and there is little doubt that most people concur with that judgment. If these delicate matters were settled by the decision of the general public, Mr. Eden's elevation would, I think, be assured." But he continued in the customary Beaverbrook idiom: "They are not so settled. There are many Conservatives in a position to influence such a crucial decision, who are not sure that Mr. Eden is the man they want to take over from the

Premier. There is a feeling that he is too remote from the organised life of the party. It is complained too that he shows little interest in home affairs. But above all there is the fear that he is not quite the immaculate Tory which they feel their next leader ought to be." Possible alternatives were then paraded: R. A. Butler—already at the head of the list—R. S. Hudson, Oliver Lyttelton and Richard Law.

In December Eden "came of age" politically—he had sat in the House for twenty-one years, and he was forty-seven years of age. It is interesting to note that Churchill attained his parliamentary majority at exactly the same age, and Lloyd George at forty-eight.

There was no doubt as to Eden's genuine popularity. It is useless to speculate how his career might have been affected if he had been a finer or more original orator. He has, indeed, had the finest masters. Captain Butcher, in the book already quoted, gives a pleasant account of Churchill endeavouring to instruct Eden in the more recondite arts of parliamentary speaking. (The entry is dated SHAEF: January, 1945): "Hopkins arrived. After pleasant greetings, he told us of his visit to London where he had spent three nights with the Prime Minister. The night before the Prime Minister had given a fatherly talk to Mr. Eden on the art and science of making a speech in the House of Commons. Mr. Eden had accepted the lecture as son from father. In the course of the admonition the Prime Minister, according to Harry, had told Eden never slyly to peek at his notes. They should be flagrantly waved in the face of the M.Ps. each time he made a point. Then he should proceed to the next. He should obviously study his notes, taking as much time as necessary—'two or three minutes, if you feel like it.' He added that the speaker should not lounge or lean against the 'box', which is the rostrum, but rather should stand well behind it and pace his remarks with backward or forward steps. The Prime Minister said he had had special glasses made which permitted him to see his notes five feet away. He advised Eden to patronise the same oculist. Neither should the 'box' be

tapped lightly with the hand, as this distracts the attention of the audience. If the 'box' is to be touched at all, it should be vigorously pounded with the fist at an appropriate moment. Added theatrical effect could be obtained if Mr. Eden would then scowl at the audience."

Meanwhile great events had been taking place. D-Day and the European invasion, the attempt on Hitler's life, the piercing of the Gothic line, the Russians at the outskirts of Warsaw, all pointed to the coming twilight of the Nazi Gods and their Wagnerian end. The growing productive and military power of the American alliance began to assert itself.

Eden joined Churchill and Roosevelt for a few days at the Conference held in Canada, and was preparing to leave with the Prime Minister once more for Moscow. A week before his departure, he spoke to the Bristol Conservatives on Conservative Party Policy—a speech of some importance, because he dealt hardly at all with foreign affairs, but again made incursion into the field of home policy. Using in the process rather more vigorous and colourful language than usual, "our faith," he said, "is a distinct faith. It is not a watered-down edition of any other faith; it is not a diluted socialism: it is not a red wine into which we have put a little water. It is as British and distinctive as beer, with a great deal more body in it than the war-time beverage!" Of the Beveridge Plan which from the outset assumed the status of a sacred cow, he said: "There is one word of warning I think it only honest to utter in relation to these proposals. The benefits which are received under these schemes are frequently described as State benefits. I personally have never much liked this phrase, because it assumes the existence of a beneficent State outside the community itself from whose bottomless purse these flowing benefits can be drawn. This is not in truth and honesty the position. These are in truth community benefits earned by the community and paid out for the assistance of those members who most need them. We must realise that if we are to benefit from these great schemes we

have also got to pay for them, and every section of the community will have to pay for them. . . .”

Again, in discussing State control and private enterprise, he said: “We are now at war with totalitarian states. To fight them we have had to use some of their own weapons. To defeat them our people have accepted regimentation and controls to an extent never before known in our history. But though we use these weapons we don’t love them. Though we employ them for a specific purpose to defeat our enemy in war, we have no intention to perpetuate them for their own sake in peace. Such a course would be too much like canonising the black-out or standing in a queue for the good of our souls.”

On his return from the Moscow Conference, where Churchill and Eden found themselves forced to promote another of those bizarre and ill-omened war-time marriages—that between M. Mikolajczyk and the “Lublin Committee” of Poles—Eden paid important visits to Cairo, Athens and Italy. It was only a month before the outbreak of the civil war in Greece arising from the Communist inspired E.L.A.S. rebellion. Although in his report to the House Eden could not forecast future developments he gave a clear picture of the devastation and economic ruin left by the retreating Germans, and emphasised the necessity of sending immediate supplies. He also mentioned casually, but ominously as well, that “our Greek friends are very politically minded.”

Exactly a month later, Eden found himself winding up a debate once again defending British intervention in Greece, and—stimulated, as ever by violent interruptions from the extreme Left benches, especially from the Communist Mr. Gallagher—his speech was crisp and forthright. “The people of Greece would have starved,” he concluded. “That is why we intervened, knowing full well the risks and the political disputes and passions of this war, and also the passions left over from the Metaxas régime. We knew all this would burst in our faces, but we thought it right to take the risk and responsibility. . . . We do not seek to dictate to Greece what her Government shall

be. . . . When arms are laid down it will be for the Greek people to decide on their Government, and they will do it with our help and goodwill, and once again, I hope, democracy will play its part in the land of its birth."

Yet, though the year ended on this sombre and tragic note—the first of the terrible post-war conflicts and disenchantments—there were many and great compensations to recall. On 24th August Paris had been liberated, and in November Eden accompanied the Prime Minister there for the celebration of Armistice Day. He was deeply moved by the welcome they received, and it is typical that in the report of their visit which he made to the House of Commons, he stressed the appalling spiritual and physical conditions under which the common people of Paris and of France had to carry on their existence. "It is not surprising," he said, "that in these conditions France, which after all these years has suddenly regained her freedom, should be like a man emerging from a darkened room into a blaze of light, dazed for a moment and grateful still to his friends for a measure of understanding and encouragement."

In January, 1945, the Greek crisis ended, after Churchill and Eden had visited Athens. Archbishop Damaskinos became Regent and General Plastiras formed a new Government, after which the E.L.A.S. signed General Scobie's truce terms. At home, Eden had to wage the last and fiercest of the three battles on British intervention in Greece in the House of Commons. He fought it well, and he fought it hard—once more against violent interruption—announcing that he had "never known an issue where he had been more absolutely convinced we are right"; he out-pointed Aneurin Bevan in a hard interchange; he demanded from the House a vote of confidence, not as a favour, or in order to demonstrate British unity, but because he was profoundly convinced that the Government was entitled to it. Sincerity and self-confidence rang out in every sentence. He held and dominated the angry House, and he won a resounding victory. It was a most impressive performance.

One by one the Axis satellites were dropping away, and

Germany and Japan were doomed. But as the war drew to its close, the problems of the peace began to multiply. In February the last of the great war-time Conferences was held at Yalta, in the Crimea, and once more it was attended by Eden as well as by Churchill. Afterwards, the Prime Minister spoke most warmly of Eden's work to the House of Commons: "Here is the moment," he said, "when the House should pay tribute to the work of Mr. Eden. I can't describe the aid and comfort he has been to me in all our difficulties. He is second to none among the Foreign Secretaries of the Grand Alliance."

It was during this speech, too, that Churchill added: "In all this war I never felt so grave a sense of responsibility as I did at Yalta. Now we enter into a world of imponderables, and at every stage self-questioning arises. It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link in the chain of destiny can be handled at a time." He might well feel this sense of destiny and of responsibility. It was at Yalta that agreement was finally reached with Russia on the Polish question, and although it is undoubtedly the fact that it would have been impossible to have insisted upon any other solution without imperilling the Grand Alliance at a time when the war was not yet won, many consciences in many of the Allied countries were uneasy. The Polish Government in London announced that they refused to accept the conditions.

Eden had to wind up the debate in the Commons, and he did so with tact and feeling. "Let me put the issue broadly," he said. "I share the feeling which the Prime Minister expressed yesterday. It is difficult at times not to be oppressed by the weight of problems which lie upon Europe. They are infinitely greater than they were after the last war. . . . If any life is to be restored to Europe, if it is to be saved from anarchy and chaos, it can only be done by the three Powers working together. . . . The foreign policy of this country has been based for centuries on the determination that no one country should dominate Europe. We believe in Europe, we are a part of Europe and I myself am convinced that no one country is ever going to

dominate Europe. It is too big for one nation to succeed in doing that. It is because of that instinct of our own that we have a special position in Europe, and that special measure of confidence is extended to us."

While countering some of the assumptions of the opponents of the Yalta settlement which were not based on fact, Eden's plea was conciliatory. He argued, in effect, that politics is the art of the possible; that it was better for the British Government to do what they could to adjust an unacceptable situation, than to take their stand on a principle, and thereby not only let the situation go forward without mitigation or adjustment, but also endanger the only basis upon which any settlement at all could possibly be achieved in the post-war world. He put forward this plea persuasively, and with tenderness for the sincerity of those who could not agree with him, and who would in any case go into the opposite lobby. Honour had been called in question, and honour, one felt, had been satisfied, owing to the readiness of the Foreign Secretary to rise to the high level of that argument.

Cologne fell to the Allied forces on 6th March, and the U.S. First Army crossed the Rhine. The Russians reached the Baltic, and, in the East, Mandalay fell to the British Fourteenth Army. But the price of military victory abroad was almost inevitably the loss of war-time political unity at home. The Prime Minister, addressing a Conservative Party Conference, announced, with regret, that the Labour Party and some Liberals "will feel themselves bound to resume their full liberty of action and thus bring this famous Coalition to an end." On the 21st March, Eden addressed the Scottish Unionists in Glasgow. Once more he touched on home, as well as on foreign affairs. After pointing out the various problems of transition from war to peace, he made an interesting reference to the role of the British Constitution: "But there is one control which, let me say as a parliamentarian and a Conservative, I hope that we shall be most watchful to maintain, that is control by Parliament over the executive. I have spoken of this in connection with foreign

affairs. It is no less significant in relation to domestic affairs. One hears much in these days of the slowness of the machinery of Parliament, that this or that particular method requires overhaul. I would beg of you to proceed in these matters with the utmost caution. It is on the vigilance of Parliament that the liberties of our people rest." Here was a sound and useful contribution to the re-opening debate.

CHAPTER 26

OUT OF OFFICE

ON 7TH May Germany signed the unconditional surrender of all her forces, and on that day Eden broadcast to the peoples of America as well as Britain from San Francisco where the Conference to establish the framework of the United Nations had already opened under the shadow of the death on the 12th April of its great champion President Roosevelt. Turning inevitably from the past to the future he spoke of what was for him a "bewildering" as well as a "majestic and triumphant hour." "Our work," he said, "if it is to be successfully concluded, as I believe it will be, cannot by itself alone ensure the peace of the world." But progress had been encouraging. He was confident that they would agree on a Charter. They were going to set up a Security Council. "But this problem of security is not our whole task, though no progress is possible so long as it remains unsolved. The Economic and Social Council has an immense part to play."

In his speech to the Conference itself, on its second day of session, 26th April, he had uttered similar warnings. "It is no exaggeration to say that the work on which we are making a start here may be the world's last chance." The proposals were admittedly a compromise. They did not constitute an attempt on the part of the four Great Powers to dictate to the world. "Great Powers," he said later, "can make a two-fold contribution. They can make it by their support of this organisation. They can make it also by setting themselves certain standards in international conduct and by observing those standards scrupulously in all their dealings with other countries."

Eden was, as always, a tremendous success in the United States, and his personal popularity must at times have been

more than a little embarrassing to him. One American columnist told his readers that "contrary to all expectations, it was Eden, not Molotov, who was the strong man of the Conference"; but it was soon obvious, to the hordes of political observers haunting the Mark Hopkins and the Fairmont hotels, that it was more than one strong man could achieve to make U.N.O. a success from its ill-starred outset of squabbles and wrangling. It was also quite clear to anyone who met Eden privately at that time that he felt the weight of responsibility hanging heavily upon him. Nor was he in the best of health. On 4th June, 1945, it was announced that he was suffering from a duodenal ulcer, and he was compelled, on his doctor's advice, to seek at least two weeks' complete rest.

On 23rd May, the Prime Minister announced the end of the Coalition Government, following a resolution by the Labour Party at their Blackpool Conference two days earlier. He also announced that Parliament would be dissolved on 15th June and that polling for the General Election would take place on 5th July. Meanwhile the so-called "caretaker Government" was installed.

Eden was unable to take part in this disastrous electoral campaign in which the Conservative *hubris* was overwhelmed by the nemesis which it had itself provoked. Mr. Churchill, that astute and experienced politician, seemed unable to take the temperature of the country, and was sadly at fault in his broadcasts and speeches—under the influence, some said, of Beaverbrook and other unofficial advisers. The Party had, after all, much to offer the nation besides Churchill's war-time leadership. There was Butler's Education Act; there were the White Papers on Social Insurance and Full Employment; there was Eden's own reputation in the international field. But to treat the Liberal and Labour Parties as impertinent interlopers and worse because they chose to exercise their democratic rights and appeal to the country for its support of their programmes was worse than folly—it was madness. Eden made one broadcast during this period on 27th June, and in it he did his best

to raise the controversy from the sludge of political vituperation into which it had fallen, but he could not from his sick bed and by one wireless appeal reverse the strategy which was being developed with such fatal gusto by the Conservative Press and particularly the Beaverbrook Group. The broadcast, excellent and sound as were the points he made, was pitched in too low a key. Eden was suffering not only from his dispiriting complaint, but also from the tragic news of the death of his elder son Simon, who had been in the R.A.F. since 1944, and was reported "missing, believed killed," in Burma.

When the Election results were announced, Eden had recovered sufficiently to accompany Churchill and Attlee to Potsdam, whence they flew home together. He himself had been returned at Warwick and Leamington with a handsome majority of 17,634, but the Conservative Party was soundly defeated, and went into Opposition for the first time since 1929.

Of all the tributes which were paid to Eden for his magnificent handling of the Foreign Office during the war, and for his great personal contribution to the victory of the Grand Alliance, let us select one that is simple, but moving from the tragic end which was so soon to overtake its author, Mr. Jan Masaryk, the Czech Foreign Minister: "Mr. Eden," said Mr. Masaryk in a broadcast to the Czech people, "has been a firm and loyal friend of Czechoslovakia. During the Munich crisis his attitude was exemplary, and during the whole war he helped us by word and deed. As he leaves the Foreign Office, I thank him with all my heart."

They were words which found an echo in the hearts of many statesmen and individuals in many nations.

After their heavy defeat at the polls in the 1945 election, the Conservative Party began immediately to take stock. They came quickly to two conclusions, first the personality of their leaders—that "character" which it used to be the boast of the public schools to instil—was not enough; something much more definite in the way of policy was necessary if they were to recapture the confidence of the country. Secondly, the Party's

organisation and, above all, its propaganda needed an urgent overhaul. Reforms were put in hand at once. On the very day of the Party's defeat, Lord Woolton, the great industrialist and administrative expert who had done such good service during the war as Food Minister, accepted the position of Chairman of the Party, with the object of reconditioning Conservative Central Office. Woolton had hitherto refused to accept a party label, and his offer to undertake this role was put forward spontaneously to Churchill himself, as a gesture of loyalty to his defeated chief.

Woolton took over an administrative machine, which was based upon the professional constituency and area agents with discretion from amateurs both within and outside Parliament, and aimed at making this as efficient as possible. The element of voluntary, amateur service had always prevailed in both the Conservative and Liberal parties, based upon the old and still tenacious traditions of politics as a field of voluntary effort. But Lord Woolton, and the Party, felt that a certain measure of professionalism, both in outlook and in organisation, had become vitally necessary if the Conservative Party machine were to become able to compete with the already highly professional Labour machine. He therefore reformed the whole administrative system along sound modern lines.

While all this was taking place in Central Office itself, other departments within the Party's central organisation were taking on new blood, and new importance. These were the Parliamentary Secretariat, which gave the leaders of the Opposition shadow cabinet services of briefing and information similar to those provided by the Whitehall departments to Ministers in office; the Research Department, which was responsible for much of the spade work in the preparation of policy statements; and the Conservative Political Centre, which directed Party political "education," by means of booklets and lectures, "brains trusts," and all the other techniques of the kind which the BBC and the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA)

had made so familiar, especially to the returning soldiers being demobilised from the forces.

These departments were, for the most part, staffed by intelligent young men with Parliamentary ambitions, many of whom have since laid the foundations of a promising career in Parliament. Among them, for instance, were Henry Hopkinson, Reginald Maudling and Cuthbert Alport. It was here that policy was thrashed out. This was the oven which turned out such brand new confections as the Industrial Charter, the Agricultural Charter and the highly tentative proposals for the reform of the House of Lords—all of which were so highly acclaimed at the time of their publication, but about which little has been heard since the Party returned to power.

All this activity within the Conservative Party had its effect upon Eden's status, and for a time it must be confessed that his star appeared to be on the wane. Although he took a prominent part, as we shall see, in the launching of the Industrial Charter, he was never very closely associated with the three "backroom" departments. On the contrary, it began to be known that the "grey eminence" of the Conservatives' feverish search for a stable doctrine and for concrete policies was R. A. Butler. It was not long before the budding geniuses of the Parliamentary Secretariat, the Research Department and the Conservative Political Centre began to glory in the title of "Butler's young men." For the Conservative Party, it was the age of the don, the economist, the man of outstanding intellectual ability—that whole "double first" mentality which had for so long been regarded with such intense suspicion and distrust. This was essentially the atmosphere for the development of Butler's talents and influence, but it did not suit Eden quite so well.

One final factor must be quoted in this analysis of what was merely a temporary and partial setback. This was the outstanding success of Ernest Bevin, the first Labour Foreign Secretary in the new administration. For years—certainly since 1938—it had been tacitly assumed, not only in Conservative circles, but throughout the country, that our foreign affairs could not be

successfully conducted unless Eden were at the helm. Now there came to the Foreign Office a man who, whatever his great personal reputation, had no experience of diplomacy, none of that background which seemed so essential to dealing on equal terms with statesmen of other nations and apparently no particular interest in foreign problems. (In fact, the Foreign Office had been Bevin's life-long ambition, and he had studied foreign affairs with minute and eager interest.) It is impossible to point to any outstanding diplomatic victory by Bevin—the climate was not propitious for British victories in that field—yet he gave the country an eminent degree of confidence and security that carried his reputation with the public at large higher, perhaps, than that of any other Minister of the Labour Government. The obvious corollary to be drawn—and there were not lacking Conservatives to draw it—was that Eden did not enjoy that unchallenged supremacy in foreign affairs which had always been attributed to him.

All this was very unfair and time has served to dilute many of these rash and unfounded judgments. It is difficult to estimate how far Eden's reputation in fact suffered from this recession. It probably did not affect the opinions of his colleagues on the Opposition front bench and in the Shadow Cabinet. Its maximum impact was on the Conservative back-benchers, and on the full-time members of the staff of the Party machine. From there it filtered down to the constituencies, where it undoubtedly caused a temporary doubt and lack of confidence among a proportion of Conservative supporters. Finally, like a wave expending its force, it was to a certain extent reflected in the Press, and thus reached the electorate as a whole. But it never became, to the country at large, the issue which at one time it appeared to be about to become in Westminster and in the quiet purlieus of Queen Anne's Gate where "Butler's young men" were capably setting the Party to rights.

Opposition left Eden free to develop other interests. He has never been a wealthy man, and it was not surprising that in October, 1945, he should have accepted a directorship of the

Westminster Bank, together with his former colleague Lord Leathers, Minister of Transport in the war-time Government. His chairman at the Westminster was Mr. Rupert Beckett, brother of Sir Gervase Beckett, Eden's father-in-law. A year later it was announced in the *Financial Times* that he had joined the board of Rio Tinto. The changes and chances of Parliamentary life involve, for those who may expect office when their Party is in power, sudden and bewildering changes of personal income, and taxation is bidding fair to drive the wealthy "amateur" out of the field. These were Eden's first ventures into the commercial field, and provided valuable experience.

The last six months of 1945 were a time for pausing and taking stock, and Eden only made one speech of any note. This was in August, during the Debate on the Address, after the King had opened the new Parliament. He began, with typical generosity, by congratulating Ernest Bevin upon the speech which he had just made. "In its wide sweep, and in its breadth of judgment and in its forthrightness, it was worthy of my Right Honourable friend [he had already asked permission to use that phrase, which is traditionally applied only to members of one's own party] and worthy of the occasion. I wish him, cordially, all good fortune in the heavy tasks that now fall to his hands." His survey was in the same temperate and bi-partisan vein. For example, about the Greek question, on which he had lately been so harried by Socialist members, he made the important point as much on the Government's as the Opposition's behalf: "Anybody can comment on our elections. Why should we not occasionally comment on other peoples? . . . With a situation such as we have in these countries, which the Foreign Secretary so well described at the beginning of his speech, it will be a gain to them and to Europe if there is as little as possible political censorship and as much as possible freedom to speak and criticise." He touched on the vexed questions of the Polish elections, and the Polish frontiers. He mentioned the assurances given by Marshal Tito to Churchill's Government, which were made a

condition of recognition by Great Britain, and which the Marshal had not in Eden's submission carried out. He gave a warning about the situation in Persia, and a hope that relations would be cemented with China, concluding with the assurance that what Bevin had said "represents a foreign policy on behalf of which he can speak for all parties in this country." It was a quiet speech, but it was what the occasion required. The time for polemics was not yet.

CHAPTER 27

OPPOSITION

JUST BEFORE the Christmas of 1945 it was announced that Churchill would be spending three months in the United States, for reasons of health, and that during his absence Eden would act as Leader of the Opposition. It was the signal for some Press assessment of his position and prospects.

Quintin Hogg wrote in the *Daily Mail*: "While Mr. Churchill peacefully daubs away his well-earned rest at Miami, Mr. Eden at Westminster will begin his dummy run as Leader of the Conservative Party. He brings to his task several enormous assets. After Mr. Churchill he is almost the only British statesman who, apart from his official position, commands an international audience. Among his fellow-countrymen he is almost the only Conservative whose popularity has survived undiminished by the defeat of his party. Among Conservatives Mr. Eden enjoys one outstanding merit—a determination not to let the party dwindle and fritter itself away as a diminishing group of right-wing malcontents." Beaverbrook's commentator in the *Daily Express*, after stressing that Churchill could appoint his deputy but not his successor, summed up the balance sheet as follows: "Assets—wide popularity, well-recognised sincerity; long Parliamentary and ministerial experience and attractive, if not particularly forceful style of speech; a ready and acute, if not particularly dominating mind. Liabilities—health showing signs of a strain at the end of the war, lack of experience in Home and Empire affairs and in Opposition—the latter weakness shared by all his colleagues." The conclusion was that "no other Conservative puts himself forward in competition with Mr. Eden at present."

Eden's first big speech in his new role was during the debate

on the Coal Nationalisation Bill. He asked the House to consider "whether the nationalisation that the miners want, or think they want, is in fact the nationalisation they are going to get in this Bill," and whether it was sure "that the evils of monopoly disappear once it comes under the aegis of the State?" He asked what would be the relation of the Minister to the Board, and where the responsibility would lie? He tackled the question of incentive, and challenged the Labour assumption that nationalisation would provide "a new psychological approach, a new feeling in the industry." And in reference to Consumers' Councils, he produced one of his rare, but effective *bons mots*: "[The Minister] is going to appoint those Consumers' Councils, and they are to be entirely responsible to him. It is horribly reminiscent of the burglar lending the householder his dog and saying: 'There you are. Go and make the best of that one.'" Finally, in dealing with compensation, he involved Mr. Dalton in the argument by suggesting that even after a fair price had been agreed, the Exchequer would be in the position of turning to the former owners and saying: "That is all right, but of course, you cannot cash your cheque, and we cannot tell you what interest you will have for your money."

Commenting on this speech on 30th January, the *Star* wrote: "Mr. Anthony Eden is disappointing the Tory die-hards. They had been looking to him for a fighting lead, but he seems to be showing little enthusiasm for the role of saboteur No. 1 of the Labour Party's social legislation.

"The plain fact is that Anthony Eden hates a rough-and-tumble of party warfare, and disdains to score more party points. He never was a die-hard. He is really a man of the Centre. In the Coalition Government he supported the framing of great social reforms which he regarded as a vital part of peace. It is a safe forecast that if the Right gets future control of the Tory Party, he will not long remain its leader."

In March, Eden made an important policy statement at Hull, confirming his faith in the doctrine of the mean. "The fundamental political problem that faces us," he said, "is that of the

relation of the individual to the State. . . . It is essentially a problem of balance and evolution. The individual can only develop a full and satisfactory life within the context of a community. That much is clear. Only by participation in organised society can the individual develop into the whole man, develop his talents, his economic ability and his social life, or enjoy his relaxation. . . . I would say that in our industrial policy we will uphold the same principle as we maintain in considering the relations of the individual to the State. We will seek to achieve the proper balance between the organising power of the State and the drive and force of free enterprise." He made it clear that the Conservative approach to industrial, as well as to all the other problems of government, was essentially practical, and not doctrinaire. Cases had to be considered on their individual merits, not forced into an ideological framework.

The controversy between the parties in the House of Commons was gaining momentum. In June, Eden had gone to Bermuda as a member of the U.K. delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Association's Conference, and taken the opportunity of going on to visit the United States and Canada, where Mr. Mackenzie King referred to him as "No. 1 Goodwill Visitor." Just before Parliament rose for the summer recess, Eden spoke to a mass meeting organised by the London Conservatives at Walthamstow. He attacked the Government vigorously for their "repeated failures" in various fields, particularly housing, food rationing and coal production, and he protested against the proposals to nationalise iron and steel. This gave him an occasion to restate the Conservative principle governing the Party's attitude to industry as a whole: "We accept that there is a field for State action in relation to our industrial life. But that certainly does not mean State ownership, for ownership is only one, and usually the worst, form of State intervention in the affairs of industry. We believe that it is essential to leave the day-to-day operation and management of industry in the hands of normal industrial and commercial management

and to confine State control solely to what is necessary to protect the interests of the consuming public."

But while domestic issues were occupying so much of his attention, the failure of the Peace Conference held during the summer at Paris, and the sharp division of the United Nations into western and eastern blocs, brought Eden once more into the field of foreign affairs. Speaking at Watford, on 23rd September, he said: "There is no reason why the two ideologies should not live together in peace if both will accept not to back their fancies in every other land. Restraint may be difficult to practise, but surely this is not too much to ask as the price for enduring peace. . . . Surely it must be plain to all that we cannot continue as we are now without consequences which may be fatal to all." The language of non-involvement was easier to sustain when the ideological conflict was between the Fascist and Communist faiths than when Democracy itself was the only other protagonist. Eden's final plea, therefore, was inevitably for western co-operation in a regional agreement such as was specifically provided for in the San Francisco Charter.

The Conservative Party Conference took place at Blackpool in early October. It was here that Eden made his demand for a "nation-wide property-owning democracy," in one of the ablest and most widely acclaimed of all his speeches outside the House. "There is one principle," he said, "underlying our approach to all these problems, a principle on which we stand in fundamental opposition to Socialism. The objective of Socialism is state ownership of all the means of production, distribution and exchange. Our objective is a nation-wide property-owning democracy. These objectives are fundamentally opposed. Whereas the Socialist purpose is the concentration of ownership in the hands of the State, ours is the distribution of ownership over the widest practicable number of individuals. Both parties believe in a form of capitalism; but, whereas our opponents believe in State capitalism, we believe in the widest measure of individual capitalism. I believe this to be a fundamental principle of political philosophy. Man should be master

of his environment and not its slave. That is what freedom means. It is precisely in the conception of ownership that man achieves mastery over his environment. Upon the institution of property depends the fulfilment of individual personality and the maintenance of individual liberty."

This objective could be achieved, Eden suggested, first by an all-out production drive to increase the total national income, and then by easing of taxation to strengthen individual incomes. "At the same time," he continued, "I think we should do well to study the various schemes for co-partnership in industry, for employee participation in profits, and so on." In fact, the speech contained all the elements which were later to be embodied in the Industrial Charter. It is not too much to say that this speech created a national sensation. It appeared to adopt—indeed, it did adopt—the theory of distribution which had hitherto been preached only by a small and uninfluential minority, and it caused some alarm among the more orthodox and old-fashioned Tory supporters, especially in big business and the City. Nevertheless, it heartened the rank and file of the Party, who were beginning to recover from the depression into which the election results had plunged them. This was perhaps as near as Eden was ever to get to embodying the ideas and following of the young Conservative planners.

In January of 1947 Eden and his wife went for a holiday to Barbados and South America. This was to be the close of the chapter of their married life, for Mrs. Eden, who had from the first found it difficult to play the part of a politician's wife, was to leave him, and later he would have to take the difficult and no doubt painful decision of obtaining a divorce on the grounds of desertion. These domestic sorrows cannot but have affected his health at that time. He had, however, the comfort of the companionship of his surviving son Nicholas, who has always been on the closest terms of friendship and affection with his father.

The hard winter of 1946-1947 was marked by the most serious fuel crisis ever experienced by the country, when in-

dustry was nearly brought to a standstill and acute domestic hardship was suffered by the entire population. In a Party political broadcast delivered on 20th March, Eden attacked the Government for their failure to plan, or to take adequate precautions before the fuel crisis developed. "As a nation," he said, "we possess all the qualities of character needed for our tremendous task. Our democratic institutions are fashioned for progress and change. We are addicted to the best kind of discipline, which has been described as organized unselfishness. It is surely the duty of those who govern to make their policies not only clearly understood but true to British character and in accord with tried and valued British institutions. . . . Today the nation is like a runner who starts, he thinks, to run his half a mile. He strains every nerve, he almost drops from exhaustion, he reaches the winning post, but, alas, the tape is not there. Nor can anyone tell him where it will be." The technique of the party political broadcast is a difficult one, and it cannot be said that any politician of any party, with the possible exception of Winston Churchill, can be relied upon to use this particular medium with consistent success. The matter of Eden's speech on this occasion was excellent, and it reads well and forcefully. Yet as a broadcast it did not make the impact it deserved.

In the summer the Industrial Charter was published, and Eden spoke at mass meetings in the course of the campaign to launch it. At Cardiff on 17th May more than 20,000 people turned out to hear him, and he himself said that he was "staggered" by the attendance at the Headingley Cricket Ground, Leeds, on 4th July. In a personal sketch of Eden appearing in the *Yorkshire Post* on that day, the paper's political correspondent wrote, "At the age of 50 Mr. Eden looks back on more than 23 years' continuous membership of the House of Commons. He has already reached the summits of political achievement, yet history is more than likely to show that the past two post-war years in Opposition make only a half-way stage. These, the contemporary historian divines, may be crucial

formative years leading from the Foreign Office to No. 10 Downing Street. Mr. Eden has conclusively shown that his qualities of mind and leadership compass far wider territories [than foreign affairs]. For more than a year he did not speak in this Parliament in foreign affairs debates in the House of Commons. It is significant that it was precisely during this period that his stature and reputation grew most rapidly, since he revealed that he had a sure grasp of home as well as foreign affairs. . . . If Eden does not bludgeon his opponents, equally—and this is perhaps more important—he avoids antagonising potential sympathisers. These are qualities which have enhanced the respect in which he is held in Parliament. In a House of Commons often turbulent and quick to scoff, Mr. Eden's speeches have been followed with an attention which has been a silent comment on his fairmindedness. He is not a theorist, but neither does he sacrifice principle to expediency."

CHAPTER 28

TURN OF THE TIDE

THE FUEL crisis of the winter and spring was followed by the economic blizzard of the summer. The House remained in session until the middle of August, but before then debated the Government's emergency measures, which included cuts in Defence and in imports resulting in reduced rations, the abolition of the basic petrol ration, a ban on foreign travel and a reduction in the housing programme.

Eden wound up the debate for the Opposition. He accused the Government of "having stumbled undecided, unprepared and without a plan into a crisis which they had not foreseen." The main burden of his charge was that the country had not been given a clear picture, and that the Government's measures—"this present hotch-potch of certain cuts and uncertain hopes"—could not be regarded as a serious remedy for the nation's ills.

The years 1948 and 1949 were eventful for Eden—almost as eventful as they could be expected to be for anyone out of office. Early in January, 1948, he arrived back in England from the Middle East, where he had been paying a visit to the Anglo-Iranian oilfields which was to stand him in the best of stead later, when the oil crisis developed at Abadan. While in the Middle East he also visited King Ibn Saud of Saudi-Arabia, and was presented by him with a magnificent sword in a gold sheath, encrusted with pearls. For a time the Customs authorities were baffled by this gift on his return; finally they allowed it through duty-free as a ceremonial presentation from the head of a State.

In March of 1948, Eden was ill again and decided to go to a nursing home for the removal of his appendix, this being

followed by three weeks' convalescence in the country. His health was causing his personal friends concern, but in political circles, not so solicitous, could once again be heard the soft rumblings of the indefinite whispering campaign about his fitness for the Party Leadership—and so, in due course, for No. 10 Downing Street. "Mr. Eden is no longer the 'Boy Wonder,'" reports the *Sunday Express* of 28th March. "It is not easy to understand why he ever was. There is no record of anything profound or original ever said by him. But he has excellent qualities. He is a good negotiator. At the Foreign Office he reads every document. He has the rare qualities of writing concise minutes and giving clear decision." But—despite Beaverbrook—Eden was showing his recuperative powers. On his 51st birthday he addressed a great rally of 7,000 Young Conservatives at the Albert Hall, and on the same day he played five strenuous sets of tennis at his Sussex home, with R.A.F. officers from the neighbouring station of Tangmere. This did not look like the decrepitude of failing powers.

During that summer came the Russian blockade of Berlin, and Britain's answer—the "air lift," inducing dangerous tensions and rumours of war. Speaking with force and dignity in a debate on 30th June, Eden declared that this was one of the occasions when the House of Commons should make its point of view felt.

"It must be made plain to the Soviet Government that sincere as we are, and sincere as we have always been, in desiring their friendship, we are not prepared to be intimidated by brute force or by blackmail. If ever there was a time to stand firm, it is now; if ever there was a cause in which to stand firm, it is this."

By this time Eden knew well how to interpret the mood of the House and of the country. By rising to the level of this grave occasion, he showed both his personal qualities and his calibre as a Parliamentarian.

There were occasional light moments, although his public humour is rare, and not particularly rich. To an agricultural

audience in the summer he told of the Ministry of Agriculture's staff having reached a total of 17,765, and still mounting. "Certainly," he observed, "it takes an awful lot of paper to keep a pig, and a complete volume to kill one." Usually, however, he kept strictly to the pedestrian safety of his brief. The significant point is that he was at this time handling with greater frequency and confidence, domestic issues both inside and outside the House.

At the Conservative Party Conference at Llandudno, he was back in his usual harness replying to a resolution on foreign policy, and had there formulated a clear and distinct doctrine which captured the imagination of the delegates, and later of the country. He himself laid great stress on this doctrine—he was to revert to it during the 1950 General Election campaign—which he christened the doctrine of the Three Unities. The first of these was the unity between the Commonwealth and Empire, without which no successful foreign policy could be pursued by this country. Next came unity with Western Europe, "and this," he explained, "is in itself a concern to the Empire"—as Mr. Menzies, then in Britain, had lately agreed. The third unity was that across the Atlantic, with the United States. These were the three objectives which the country should pursue. His mastery of his subject was shown in the emphasis which he laid on the fact that these three unities were not disparate, not incompatible, but complementary.

Early in 1949, Eden paid a visit to Canada, Australia and New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Malaya.

This was the year of the historic settlement enabling India as a Republic to remain inside a monarchical Commonwealth—a formula of great moment for the free world. It was a timely tour, particularly as affecting his outlook on India and Pakistan. Eden's attitude to the transfer of power in India had originally been one of acquiescence rather than of enthusiastic support. He had not been called upon to declare himself publicly, but his informal reactions to the policy and implementation were known to be reserved and hedged with some doubt.

His first visit to independent India—albeit brief—made a profound impression upon him both in regard to the stability of the régime and the calibre of the leaders. A stay of a few hours in New Delhi sufficed to bring him in touch with the political and human factors underlying Indian independence. It also enabled him to get to know Nehru, now the Indian Prime Minister, whose prestige as the upholder of a middle course between the mighty opposites of Communist Russia and capitalist America was in the ascendant. He also had his first and last encounter with Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister and the strong man of the Congress on the home front. Patel died shortly afterwards, and with him passed perhaps the greatest administrative leader among the nationalists of Asia. Patel, largely unknown outside India, always made a deep impression on visiting statesmen encountering him for the first time.

On his return in July, Eden was chairman at a reception at the Dorchester Hotel, at which Ernest Bevin was the guest of honour. Instead of giving him the formal title of "Mr. Chairman," Bevin said that he proposed to address him as "fellow trade-unionist." It was, he said, a great pleasure and privilege to have worked with "my old friend Anthony Eden" all through the war. About this time, too, Eden celebrated his twenty-fifth year as a Member of Parliament for the Warwick and Leamington Division, and Churchill sent the Division one of his typical messages: "Warwick and Leamington," he said, "have won material distinction by their choice and by their steadfastness. Anthony and I have been colleagues and comrades, hand and heart, in some of the most formidable events. We now work together to win for our country the prosperity and progress that are her due."

In July, too, the Conservative Party published a restatement of policy entitled "The Right Road for Britain." That evening Eden delivered a Party political broadcast explaining the broad lines of the document, and drawing the conclusion that the country's watchword ought to be "faith, freedom and respon-

sibility." This again was not an outstanding broadcast—it was not nearly as good as that on his Commonwealth tour which he had delivered a few weeks before—but it was significant that Eden had been closely and publicly associated with the three most important manifestoes issued by the Conservative Party in their all-out bid for electoral support.

As the Labour tide began during 1950 to recede, and the impetus that had swept the Party into power five years previously to slow down, assessment of Conservative leadership assumed a more pointed meaning. Various estimates of Eden's qualities and prospects began to appear in the press. Francis Williams, a former editor of the *Daily Herald* and adviser on public relations to Mr. Attlee wrote in the *News Chronicle*: "Eden is the most loyal of colleagues. He is reasonable and conciliatory. If he cannot rise with Mr. Churchill to the very greatest occasions, neither does he ever fall below them to the extent that Mr. Churchill sometimes does. He has courage and charm. As one who, in the brave days when we were seeking to build a new world at San Francisco, used to meet him not only late at night but also at breakfast, I can testify that he is seldom moody. He has his limitations, but I think he will prove a good Conservative leader. I will go further: I think he will be a better one than Mr. Churchill."

His overwhelming popularity was a recurring theme for wonderment and scrutiny. The *Observer* profile asked the question, and answered it thus: "How has it come about that Eden is one of the figures that is held to be representative of the country? Why is he one of the few men who can get a good hearing from all classes of the community? There is no simple answer to such questions, but it seems probable that Anthony Eden's reputation is based even more on what he is than on what he has done.

"The figure of Anthony Eden is essentially a likeable one; it is also one to respect. To achieve fame and remain modest; to have authority and remain gentle; to contend for power without becoming coarsened and cunning—these are major virtues,

as rare in private life as in politics. Perhaps it is these qualities that have gained for Capt. Eden, the Foreign Secretary who resigned, that special place in the regard of his countrymen which makes him one of the leading figures of our day."

The *Liverpool Post* tried to define his popular appeal. "Mr. Anthony Eden, who is almost certain to succeed Mr. Churchill as leader of the Conservative Party, is one of the most popular politicians in Britain, and one of the best known of British politicians in the outside world.

"Today he can attract an audience of well over 20,000 at an open-air meeting—a quite unusually large number in this country—and when he visited Australia and other Dominions during his Commonwealth tour last year, he had an exceptionally cordial reception everywhere.

"The explanation of this popularity is hard to discover. He is not an exciting speaker; he is not an originator of lively phrases or new ideas. . . . But he is the born unifier. He is a master at producing the greatest measure of agreement from apparently incompatible elements. Here lies his secret. He is the man of common opinions but uncommon abilities—and that a hundred years ago was Bagehot's description of the successful political leader."

In July, 1950, Eden paid another visit to Canada and the U.S.A., where the warmth of his reception was repeated. He was back in England on the 4th September and in the following month he presided at the celebrations in honour of the twenty-first birthday of his son Nicholas.

The General Election was looming. The Socialist Party had pushed through their Bill providing for the territorial re-distribution of seats. It was a controversial measure only in the sense that its practical provisions seemed to the Conservative Opposition, and to some Liberals, unduly to favour Socialist candidates; all parties were agreed that some such measure was long overdue. In the event, Eden found himself faced with a particularly difficult decision. His own constituency of Warwick and Leamington lost the rural, country-town and highly Con-

servative district surrounding Stratford-on-Avon, which went to form the new division of Stratford and South Warwickshire, taking in a large portion of the rural areas which had previously formed part of the Rugby division. This became, of course, an absolutely safe Conservative seat. Warwick and Leamington itself, on the other hand, had acquired a new, strong industrial population, and the Lockheed works had grown to large proportions as a result of their important war work. Eden was given the choice between the two, and chose to stand by Warwick and Leamington. At the time, this was considered not only loyal, but courageous. But his loyalty and courage were amply justified by a five-figure majority. Before the election campaign, the result might have seemed to be anyone's guess.

The election ended in a deadlock which practically divided the nation in two—a division which was really maintained in the new election the following year. Of the incidents which occurred during those uneasy months, the most important, from the point of view of Eden's career, was the notable failure at the Foreign Office of Herbert Morrison, who had taken over after the death of Ernest Bevin. When the results of that election were known, and the Conservatives returned to power with that slim but workable majority that has been of little satisfaction to anyone, the rapid decline of our diplomacy had set the stage, in a political sense, for a more than usually ardent welcome to Eden, who returned to his post with the good wishes of the whole country.

CHAPTER 29

DIPLOMACY AT LARGE

AT THE time of the Conservative defeat in 1945 sudden assignment to the political wilderness was no doubt an unpleasant shock for Eden. At first sight it must have appeared as a major political check to his progress, but on deeper analysis the experience was timely and valuable. He had been in the harness of office, save for the eighteen months' break following his resignation—which in itself offered no real respite—continuously for some twelve years. Throughout that anxious time the conduct of British foreign policy had involved long hours but limited initiative. It was the period of the midnight watch. The routine had made inroads on his strength and health. Public identification of Eden had been with precocity and youth, the new image was blurred but there was the sense that he was ageing prematurely from overwork.

Opposition therefore meant physical release. It also provided political escape from the disenchantments of peacemaking. It is unlikely that if he had been Foreign Secretary between 1945 and 1951 he would have acted far differently from his successor Ernest Bevin. Obviously there would have been variations of tactics and technique in the handling of particular problems, but strategically Soviet expansionist policy conducted by means of Cominform and cold war left a British Foreign Secretary with no choice but to accept and grasp the logic of two worlds. The second world war forced the pace of history; in 1939 we had reached the quarter finals of international power politics—eight nations could still lay claim to the status of Great Powers with major war-making potential. By 1945 it was painfully clear that the world arbiters were reduced to two super states. It was perhaps an instinctive aware-

ness of this sudden and unexpected inheritance that encouraged Roosevelt and Hopkins in the last tragic months of their lives to explore a settlement with Russia at the expense even of their relationship with the English-speaking democracies. At the same time traditional American suspicions of British imperialism had never been wholly allayed by Churchill and Eden even at the height of the wartime Entente. If Soviet diplomacy in 1945 had exploited the Grand Alliance and total victory by pursuing a strategy of peaceful co-existence, it is quite possible that in the prevailing mood of demobilization and of self-doubt in the West the whole of Europe might have seceded to communism by constitutional process. A Socialist Government returned for the first time in British history with an absolute majority and dedicated to the task of achieving a domestic new deal might have given further encouragement to Stalin to "try kindness" first. But fortunately for the free world the Stalinist master minds were neither adaptable nor mature enough to seize their opportunity. Instead they took the one course calculated to mobilise the weakening democratic will and give unity to otherwise divided aims. The Kremlin high command embarked upon a policy which by 1947 had more than anything else provided the stimulus for Gen. Marshall's historic offer of aid to Europe and Bevin's no less historic acceptance of it. Not for the first time in European history had a policy based on the exploitation of fear and force induced results entirely opposite to those intended by the perpetrators. The response to Soviet blackmail over Berlin—perhaps the most dangerous single episode in the Soviet drive to the West—had proved the will and capacity of the West to resist.

But a defensive sealing up of the various danger spots around the periphery of Communist power was not from the outset regarded as a politically adequate or strategically secure response to the challenge facing free Europe. There was an upsurge, the outcome of a profound instinct for survival, in favour of a closer political integration than had hitherto been envisaged. Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg evoked the Benelux partnership. In

France after the withdrawal of the militant de Gaulle, Schuman, the one continuing element as Foreign Minister in a series of shadowy coalition governments, produced the Schuman plan, as France's master formula for settling the historic Franco-German feud. Always underlying these moves towards closer European integration was the assumption that Britain would join the partnership. During their period of Opposition the Conservatives, under Churchill's leadership, gave currency to just such a hope. In a series of major orations and in particular at Zurich, Churchill put his immense authority behind the establishment of a Western Union; and the creation of the Council of Europe as an experiment in supranationalism was largely the outcome of his inspiration. British Conservatism was therefore cast in the role of advocate for more ambitious, if localised, policies of collective security than Eden had seen fit to sponsor in pre-war League of Nations days.

At first both Socialists and Conservatives found it hard to accustom themselves to their new roles of Government and Opposition. Not all Conservatives were ready to follow Churchill into the loftier regions of European Unity, and there were powerful Labour groups unwilling or unable to accept the harsher realities of Soviet power and purpose. As we have seen, it fell to Eden and Bevin—in themselves almost symbolic prototypes of Conservative and Socialist Britain—to achieve the necessary equilibrium and to develop a bi-partisan attitude to British foreign policy which in its own context and influence on events challenged comparison with the historic relationship developed between successive Democrat Secretaries of State and the Republican Senator Vandenberg.

When as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, Eden returned to the Foreign Office on 27th October, 1951, the unsolved problems that he found on his desk were unusually daunting even for what we have come to regard as the normal state of international affairs in the post-World War II world. Fighting had continued fiercely for over fifteen months in Korea and suggestions for truce talks, in their most

embryonic stage, were encountering the usual discouraging difficulties: the possibilities of peace seemed remote. While the European Defence Community had been agreed in principle, there was mounting hostility to its implementation in France. The text of a revised British draft resolution calling for a resumption of negotiations between Britain and Persia on the oil question in accordance with the principles indicated by the International High Court had been lost on the higher and bleaker reaches of the Security Council. There seemed no prospect of an end to the war against the Communist Vietminh in Indo-China which continued to drain formidable proportions of France's military and economic reserves. The barometer of South Asian stability and security pointed to cloudy. The West was impeded from harvesting the full fruits of Marshal Tito's now three-year-old break with the U.S.S.R. because of the intractable and dangerous Italo-Yugoslav wrangle over Trieste. Egypt's quarrel with Britain over the future of the Sudan and the canal zone made it impossible to do more than tinker with the political, social and economic problems that demanded attention throughout the Middle East, a vitally important strategic area for the whole free world. The Anglo-Egyptian deadlock also had unfortunate repercussions on Anglo-American relations, on which more thoughtful observers were coming to realise the future of world peace depended.

Eden set to work at once and within ten days of his return to the Foreign Office he was ready to offer the House of Commons a comprehensive survey of British foreign policy. His clarity of mind and obvious mastery of diplomatic method were refreshing alike to Parliament and public. On disarmament, he said that the free Western powers aimed to inspire confidence in a progressive system of "disclosure by verification," so that the nations could disarm without fears for their security. He promised government support for the development of the European Defence Community within the Atlantic community. He re-stated the government's willingness to reopen negotiations with Persia. He offered terms to Egypt but

said that in the meantime the British Government would maintain its position in the canal zone on the basis of its rights under the 1936 treaty (originally made by Eden himself). In a reference to the arrangements made for cease-fire talks in Korea, he emphasised that a Korean Armistice must provide for its supervision and for the future of prisoners of war. Sixteen nations had provided troops to fight under the U.N. banner, but the American contingent remained by far the greatest. Already U.S. casualties were over 90,000.

E.D.C. proposals included two basic ideas: (1) joint military plans and forces for the defence of Europe, (2) their political control through supranational European Council, not directly responsible to the individual governments that composed it. The end of 1951 saw both Churchill and Eden stressing that Britain was ready to co-operate to the fullest possible extent in the common European defence force, but was not ready to join any political union. Elaborating these points, Eden said that British association with E.D.C. would include close consultation and, subject to the Supreme Commander's requirements, the linking of British forces on the Continent with the European defence forces for training, administration and supply, and a considerable blending of U.K. European air forces. He stated categorically that British forces would remain on the Continent as long as necessary. On the other hand, he asked the U.S.A. not to press Britain to join a European Federation, "for Britain's story and her interests lie far beyond the continent of Europe." He emphasised that in addition to British forces in Korea, Malaya and the Middle East, Britain had the largest armoured force on the continent of Europe of any of the Atlantic powers, and had played a leading part in the reconstruction of the European economy.

Early in January, 1952, Churchill took Eden and a large staff to Washington to introduce himself in the new role of head of a peacetime Conservative Government. He told American newspapermen that the main object of the four talks that he had had with President Truman was to promote that in-

timate understanding between the two powers which had proved so important during the war. Speaking later in the House of Commons, Churchill emphasised that neither before nor during his visit had any formal commitments or decision been arrived at concerning the possibility of a Communist breach of Korean truce. But he was glad to have had an opportunity in Washington to make it clear that the English-speaking world was acting in true loyalty and comradeship in Korea and was resolved to bring that "local event" into its proper relationship to the predominating danger in Europe.

At Columbia University Eden was equally emphatic. He did not believe that the Soviet Union wished to face the destruction that a third war would bring and he thought that the danger of war was less than it was one or two years earlier.

On 6th February, King George VI died. Among those who came to London for the funeral was Dr. Adenauer, who made a point of having a special interview with Eden on 16th February. Doubtless he discussed N.A.T.O. and E.D.C. After tripartite talks in London on 17th, 18th and 19th February, between the British, French and American Foreign Secretaries, a communiqué was issued re-affirming the abiding interest of the American and the British Foreign Secretaries in the establishment of E.D.C. and the decision of the governments to maintain their forces in Europe. Consultations would continue.

The Foreign Secretary was obviously exerting every effort to overcome the endless difficulties in which E.D.C. was bogged, and to persuade the French that their one hope of living in security with a rearmed Germany was to accept the plan which MM. Schuman and Pleven had themselves originated, whereby Germany's armed forces would be integrated into a European army in such a way that no single power could retain control over its individual forces.

At a N.A.T.O. meeting in Lisbon, Eden reported to the House, there had been agreement over Germany's defence contribution which in itself was a major step in strengthening Western defence and establishing a new Europe. His constant

pre-occupation at this period, as indeed throughout the next three years until his hopes were realised *tant bien que mal* in the European Western Union pacts at the end of 1954, was the strengthening of European solidarity. To this end he urged, for example, on 19th March, 1952, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to identify itself more closely with the Schuman plan and the European Defence Community. It had been suggested that the Council should be remodelled. Eden thought that it could provide ready-made machinery for the Schuman plan and E.D.C. He warned the ministers that it would be the greatest mistake if the Council were to develop in rivalry with anybody, whether the Schuman plan or E.D.C. On the remodelled lines suggested it might be possible to arrange for countries like Britain to be associated with the parliamentary and ministerial institutions of the community as well as with the executive organs.

But Eden was never given a respite in which to concentrate on any one problem. His role suggested the expert conjurer working towards a climax, new balls constantly added to those which he was expected to keep in the air. He had hardly packed his bags from the Council of Europe when he was called upon to meet trouble blowing up in the Commons over recent disorders in Trieste, and Persia.

Over Trieste he remonstrated with Marshal Tito for attacking the administrative arrangements and refused to accept that there had been any violation of the Italian Peace Treaty. To Persia early in April he delivered a firm note on the oil dispute. Government and people were beginning to feel the consequences of Nationalist Prime Minister Mossadegh's policy. He had to confess that his expectations of being able to sell 5,000,000 tons of oil a year without foreign help had been mistaken. "We are at the cross-roads," he cried, "if we slight our own prestige, renounce liberty, and independence, and our rights, and accept the International Bank's conditions we shall be approaching hell."

From Persia and oil, to Egypt and water: in the last week

of April Eden began talks in London with Sir Ralph Stevenson, British ambassador to Egypt and Sir Robert Howe, governor-general of the Sudan. The canal zone and the relationship of Egypt, the Nile and Sudan, were canvassed in search of a settlement that must have beneficial repercussions throughout the Middle East.

Then back again for a new attack on E.D.C. Opening a foreign affairs debate in the Commons on 14th May, Eden dealt with the Labour Executive's suggestion that fresh elections should be held in Western Germany before any commitments were made on a German contribution to E.D.C. To Eden this seemed "an unusual and improper interference in the internal affairs of another country," the only effect of which would be to delay the signature of E.D.C. and the contractual obligation for more than one year, as elections in West Germany could not take place before the autumn of 1953. That, in his view, was to invite if not compel the failure of the whole plan. He suggested that the Opposition's policy might be based on its sympathy with the Opposition to the German government, and he emphasised the danger of basing foreign policy on such partisan considerations. Eden then warmly defended the whole E.D.C. conception, and emphasised the safeguards that it provided against the danger of German rearmament. Care had been taken to ensure that national contributions were so balanced that no one member could dominate the Community by force of numbers. The government still intended that the E.D.C. proposals and German contractual negotiations should be signed that month, and "Communist threats, now becoming more violent, ought not to influence our action, except perhaps to consolidate our purpose." The views of the Government in all these matters had been fully set out in the Note of 13th May to the Soviet Government and any Soviet approaches to a settlement would be carefully examined.

Since E.D.C. was eventually rejected, it may seem of academic interest to record that the Committee of the Council of Europe met on 22nd May to discuss and to adopt Eden's plan

for the remodelling of the Council in such a way that it should not compete with but should provide a framework for such institutions as the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (O.E.E.C. originating in the Schuman plan). Since, however, Britain's refusal to identify herself without qualification with E.D.C. has, on occasion, been held to have been a major factor in its rejection, it is worth bringing out the extent to which, short of formal identification, Eden, with Churchill's full approval, was ready to go, and the continuous and extraordinary efforts to reassure Europe's statesmen and to create, not merely an organisation but even perhaps more important, an atmosphere in which the European dream could be realised.

Mr. Eden, Mr. Acheson, M. Schuman and Dr. Adenauer on 26th May signed the complex documents known as the Bonn Treaty which covered in detail the contractual agreements between West Germany and the Western powers. Schuman, on behalf of the three Western powers, said that the French people as well as their Government subscribed to the treaties and that they wanted not merely a reconciliation but co-operation and a new spirit of mutual confidence.

It was tragic that the vote of the French National Assembly was in 1954 to disprove Schuman's brave words, for although the alliance of the free nations of the West was held together by the successor European Western union pacts, the possibilities of developing a genuine supranational organisation now seemed remoter than ever.

The next day the French, Belgian, German, Italian, Dutch, Luxembourg and all the N.A.T.O. states signed the E.D.C. treaty, its related protocols and agreements (including the tripartite declaration on E.D.C. and on Berlin) and the agreements on restriction of German arms production. The determination to maintain forces as long as required in Berlin was clearly re-stated.

Eden himself left for Berlin but the Soviet authorities (in symbolic comment on European defence?) refused to allow

British and U.S. patrols to pass along the Autobahn to Helmstedt.

In Berlin, Eden gave a firm assurance to the West Berlin senate that the city would continue to be defended by Allied troops. Any attack on Berlin would be regarded as an attack on the Western powers. Berlin would once again be the capital of a united Germany.

CHAPTER 30

DARKNESS AND LIGHT

BEFORE the statesmen of Europe had time to flatter themselves on what seemed epoch-making signatures in Bonn, the Far Eastern skies began to lower. In London, Churchill described the Korean situation as "very grave." The Communists had used the lull in the fighting to reinforce and re-equip their armies and they were now "in a position to launch a major offensive with little warning." In the Lords, Lord Alexander said that the Communist forces numbered nearly a million compared with 500,000 in July, 1951. They were believed to have 500 tanks and self-propelled guns and 1,800 aircraft, of which about 1,000 were jets.

Within a few days of his return Eden was immersed in a new Korean complication. He revealed to the Commons that the conditions of the prisoners' camps in Koje Island aroused the gravest concern. He estimated that 115 prisoners had been murdered by fellow prisoners. Nor did ideological murders in prison camps complete the tale of the worries of the U.N.O.'s hard-pressed representatives in Korea.

For years, Syngman Rhee, the Korean President, had denounced the undemocratic procedure of tyrants. To make doubly sure that no tyrant could slip in by the back door in his own country, he began to take precautions of a kind that led Eden to assert in the Commons that proclamation of martial law in Pusan on 24th May on the pretext of guerrilla activities there was not warranted. On 24th June, the British chargé d'affaires in Pusan had informed President Rhee of his government's concern at recent political developments in South Korea and had urged him to abide by the constitution.

"The first prerequisite," said Eden, "is a return to constitu-

tional government by the lifting of martial law and the release of the arrested members of the Assembly."

The next day Eden was holding the line in an attempt to explain the Yalu River raid. The heaviest bombing of the Korean war had occurred without Britain knowing anything about it. Was some change of policy involved?

Mr. Churchill had already stated that attacks such as the bombing of Yalu River targets by the Americans did not appear to "involve any extension of the operations hitherto pursued or to go beyond the discretionary authority in the United Nations Supreme Commander. So far as Her Majesty's Government is concerned there has been no change of policy." Mr. Attlee said that an explanation was needed as to why Lord Alexander, who had been on an official visit to Tokyo and Seoul only ten days before the bombing, had been told nothing of the intention to make the raid. If the Americans had decided that they must strike hard to get some decision in the truce negotiations that represented a change of policy and they should have consulted their allies. The action had a political as well as military aspect.

Eden assured the House again that there had been no change of British policy; it was still their purpose to limit the conflict in Korea, and to do everything to attain an armistice on fair and reasonable terms. The Suiho plant (which had been bombed) provided forty per cent of the electric power in North Korea. Washington approved the attack but Her Majesty's Government was not informed or consulted; he regretted this. Extensive bombing had, however, been carried out day and night in Korea; it was nothing new but had been going on ever since the talks began. The Communists had also been making heavy infantry attacks. He spoke of the part played in the build-up of the enemy's strength by the power stations which were perfectly legitimate targets. None was within 1,000 yards of the frontier. When the Opposition motion came to the vote on July 1, Churchill read an off-the-record statement made by Mr. Acheson, who had agreed to its publication, in which he said that the British Government ought to have been informed

or consulted about the Yalu River bombing. The Americans had intended to do so but a misunderstanding among officials had caused the omission. While Mr. Acheson did not admit Britain's absolute right to be consulted, he added: "You are a partner of ours in this operation and we wanted to consult you. We should have, and we recognise this error."

On 23rd July came the news that General Naguib had carried out a bloodless *coup d'état* in Cairo and proclaimed himself Commander-in-chief. Eden had taken the precaution in the previous month of calling a conference of diplomatic representatives from eleven different Middle East countries to bring himself up to date on the unsettled Middle East situation, but he had hardly time to stress the Government's interest that a stable and orderly administration should emerge from the Egyptian crisis, before he was diverted from Anglo-Egyptian relations to the Bonn and E.D.C. treaties.

Speaking on a Government motion approving these two treaties and the protocol of the North Atlantic treaty of 27th May, he urged the danger of delaying ratification and denounced as a profound error the idea that postponement would make the Russians more amenable. All post-war experience disproved this and the Russians would only welcome delay as a triumph for their policies. It was clear from the Soviet notes what these policies were. They wanted a return to the Potsdam system (of Allied control) pending a peace settlement, and they wanted a dictated and not a negotiated peace. They had persistently evaded any attempt to ensure the setting up of a freely elected all-German Government before a treaty could be negotiated. What the Soviets wanted was a Germany "left in dangerous and irresponsible isolation in the heart of Europe." The Government was convinced that there would only be some modification in the Soviet attitude if they proceeded firmly with their plans.

Eden upheld the position of the previous Government that the country's over-all defence burden would not be increased by the new treaties, and he pointed to the help which would be

derived from German rearmament in the common defence effort, and added a significant reminder of the formidable increase in competition in the world market which the United Kingdom would have to face if Germany were allowed to devote all her energies to civilian production instead of contributing to her own defence. The treaty offered a new future for Germany, a new chance for Europe to turn aside from century-old divisions and disputes and a chance to place relations between Germany and the Western powers on a basis of friendship and unity. To those who would now postpone the issue, Eden declared that it was Britain's duty to give a lead, and that any delay would damage the cause of peace, encourage our enemies and depress our friends.

A reminder that even the most harassed Foreign Secretaries have private lives, however rationed, came in August of 1952 with the news of the strengthening of the ties of the families of the Prime Minister and Prime Minister designate. Eden's engagement to Miss Clarissa Spencer Churchill, a niece of Winston Churchill was announced. Eden had obtained a divorce from his first wife in 1950. It was no secret that the break up of his home life arising from the separation and the death of his son had taken toll both of his health and temperament. He gave the impression to those working with him at the time of being tense and lonely. It is not always realised what exacting demands politics make on private lives. In Clarissa Churchill Eden was fortunate enough to find a partner with wide cultural interests, attractive, original and if, at the outset, shy in public, of firm personal character well capable of supporting her husband in strong decisions. The wedding took place at Caxton Hall to scenes of enthusiasm usually associated with the carefully planned marriages of film stars. This wedding captured the public imagination and the presence of Churchill as witness wreathed in cherubic smiles for bride and bridegroom alike confirmed everyone in the feeling that here indeed was an appropriate union. It was perhaps to be expected that some spokesmen of church opinion should allow themselves the

luxury of producing homilies on divorce and example, but it is probable that this wedding and its obvious fitness played its part in making many people re-examine their hearts and minds on the whole subject of the re-marriage of innocent parties.

Following a reception at 10 Downing Street the Edens went to Portugal for their honeymoon.

On his return Eden was soon back in the vortex of international affairs. With unremitting energy and no small measure of political courage, he sought to seize diplomatic initiative whenever available. In September he explained to the Council of Europe his proposals for strengthening links between the Council and the supranational organisations, E.D.C. and the newly-formed Coal and Steel Community.

Also in September, he took the bold decision to meet Tito in Belgrade. Diplomatically the contact was both necessary and overdue. Tito's Yugoslavia ever since the break with Stalin had transformed the strategic scene in the Mediterranean; but political doubts remained. There were influential groups both in Britain and America which were not easily reconciled to Churchill's original support for Tito, and did not place much credence on Communist deviations. But general considerations apart, there was the particular problem of Trieste. Eden wished to grasp this nettle. From a political settlement here, wider benefits might accrue. In fact, he was able to have a full and friendly exchange of views on world problems.

A few days later Eden was in Vienna meeting Dr. Figl, the Austrian Chancellor, who was still faced with Russia's blank refusal to sign a peace treaty.

In November he attended the General Assembly of the United Nations, and rejected out of hand Mr. Vishinsky's revised proposals for the release of prisoners of war in Korea because the Soviets insisted on total repatriation irrespective of the prisoners' personal wishes.

Eden opened 1953 with a compromise broadcast survey. He explained in clear terms the broad principles of British foreign policy, but as has often been the case his voice was lacking in

animation. Fortunately for him and his Party he appeared to be far more successful in presenting himself over the television medium. In this particular broadcast he began by saying that Britain's foreign policy had two aims to secure peace—which meant that Britain must be strong to negotiate and to deter aggression—and to develop a healthy and balanced system of world economy and trade. He warned that the Communist threat remained and that if the danger of war had receded, it was only because the free world was getting stronger. He welcomed improving relations among Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia, and between Yugoslavia and Austria, and he pledged co-operation with any country contributing actively to the collective effort for peace, even if he did not agree with its internal policy.

In the Commons, Eden kept up his campaign for E.D.C. Once more he proclaimed Britain's support for the plan, but added: "It would be wrong to give any false hope of Britain joining the E.D.C." President Eisenhower's Secretary of State, Mr. John Foster Dulles, who had been visiting the West European capitals with Mr. Stassen, Director of the Mutual Security Agency, said that they were "on the whole encouraged" by what they had heard from the six E.D.C. countries: they believed that there was a "responsible determination to bring the E.D.C. treaty to completion."

While Eden was engaged in talks with Mr. Dulles in Washington, momentous news came through on 5th March of the death of Stalin. Mr. Dulles at once told a press conference that he saw greatly improved prospects for peace in the Communist dictator's death. "The Eisenhower era begins," he said, "as the Stalin era ends," and he believed that the guiding spirit of the new era would be liberty, not enslavement.

In April, Eden had been due to visit Italy, Greece and Turkey, following up his Yugoslav visit of the previous year, but on 5th April the Foreign Office issued the disturbing announcement that the visits would have to be postponed and that Eden would have to undergo an operation. Two days later it was

stated that Churchill would himself take charge of the Foreign Office. Eden was in fact away from his post until the beginning of October: From the ceremonies and festivities of Coronation he was of necessity absent. He was in fact a very sick man, the frequent bouts of pain he was suffering were symptoms of a serious condition. He underwent two operations but each time the stitches had hardly been removed before the trouble re-occurred. It was fortunate that an American surgeon who had great faith in his specialised treatment of gall-bladder cases offered to operate. The operation was successful, and there was no disheartening relapse, but on his return home he looked extremely fragile and clearly bore the traces of the ordeal he had undergone.

During Eden's absence one of the most interesting developments was Churchill's now famous summary of foreign affairs given to Parliament on 11th May in the course of which he stressed that although Britain was not a member of E.D.C., she had, since the end of the war, five times guaranteed in the various N.A.T.O. and E.D.C. agreements to help to defend France against attack. "We have stationed our largest military force with the French on the Continent. . . . We have not got a divisional formation in our own island. No nation has ever run such risks . . . and no nation has ever received so little recognition for it." All this was a prelude to the release of a trial balloon for one of those personal meetings among Olympians which Churchill had so often and so successfully brought off in the past. It was a mistake, he told the Commons, to assume that nothing could be settled with the U.S.S.R. unless everything were settled simultaneously, and he believed that a conference at the highest level confined to the smallest number of powers, should be held without delay.

The wheels were set in motion for a meeting between Prime Minister and President when Churchill himself was taken ill and had like his Foreign Secretary to retire for convalescence. At the same time as this abortive effort to give a new shift to British diplomacy, a great uprising took place in Eastern Ger-

many which was only put down by the use of overwhelming force. Although Churchill was compelled to put his "talks at the summit" aside, the undertone of conflict between his personal and the Foreign Office official approach persisted.

Then in July came the long delayed signature of the Armistice at Panmunjom. Although Eden was still sick at the time, he was after his return able to intervene constructively on many occasions in the post-armistice negotiations which were apt to fall between the stools of Chinese obduracy and American toughness. Fruitful Commonwealth co-operation was often apparent as, for example, in November, 1952, when Eden, after suggesting some friendly amendments which were cordially accepted, supported, against American opposition, India's proposals for the repatriation of prisoners, which were eventually adopted.

The episode was significant as evidence that the constant and sincere proclamations by Churchill and Eden that the cornerstone of British policy was the Anglo-American alliance did not mean that Britain was an American satellite, but retained the self-confidence, born of long experience in international affairs, to back her own judgment, in a constructive, friendly and firm manner. Inevitably such independence was bound to cause some Anglo-American friction.

Such friction had, for many reasons, gathered force from the outbreak of the Korean war. It was natural that the U.S.A., which carried by far the heaviest burden, should expect to take the lead in policy, but the divergent authorities, ranging from the President and the Secretary of State, through a multitude of congressional committees and spokesmen, to generals with views as pronounced as their chins, led to confusion and irritation which grew as the international situation, particularly in South-East Asia, deteriorated.

CHAPTER 31

GENEVA AND S.E.A.T.O.

NINETEEN-FIFTY-FOUR was one of the most dramatic periods in post-war international relations and at the year's end Eden's reputation had never stood higher. As one commentator said, Eden may not have an original mind but it is singularly unblurred; his mastery of the most complicated issues, his grasp of essentials, his power of exposition, his firm and constructive steering of international committees, and not least his refusal to be discouraged or rattled by criticism that was often as uninformed as it was bitter, were recognised by colleagues as widely separated in their viewpoints as Mr. Dulles, Pandit Nehru, M. Mendès-France, and M. Molotov.

Nowhere was Eden's resourceful diplomatic technique better illustrated than in the conference that met in Geneva from 29th April to 21st July, 1954, in an endeavour to settle the futures of Korea and Indo-China. Although the Four-Power Conference held in Berlin in January, 1954, revealed that the U.S.S.R. was not ready to accept any German or Austrian peace treaty which would entail the withdrawal of Soviet troops from their forward positions in those countries, the results did at least also suggest that the U.S.S.R. had no desire to disturb the peace of Europe in the visible future or to warm up the cold war. The conference served therefore to ease East-West tension. Its last act was to agree to hold a meeting on Korea at Geneva in April.

The Geneva Conference was to strain Anglo-U.S. relations almost to the breaking point. The root cause of the friction was that whereas Eden hoped that the *détente* over Europe created by the Berlin Conference could be spread to Korea, Indo-

China and Asia generally, the Americans were fearful at what they regarded as the potentially appalling repercussions of sitting down at the same table with Communist China. Whereas a meeting with Chou En-lai seemed to Eden a normal opportunity of taking soundings of peace, it struck the Americans, if not as a form of abnormal vice, at any rate as an unholy communion with the Devil. Britain, in common with many other states, considered the banishment of Communist China from U.N.O. to be disadvantageous, although Churchill and Eden were agreed that the question of her admission could not be raised until the Korean and Indo-Chinese conflicts were settled.

To the U.S. Congress, Communist China's admission to grace was anathema, and they feared that the Geneva Conference might produce some document the signature of which would amount to recognition and ease China into U.N.O. by a side door. Simultaneously, their attitude seemed to be that any encounter with Communist diplomats was bound to result in a game of strip-tease poker in which the non-Communists would lose the shirts off their backs and the stripes off their pants, and that it was therefore safer to "praise the Lord and pass the ammunition" since the only language that the Communists understood was force or the threat of it. The Americans were also sure that the Communists would spin out the Geneva Conference in order to delay any joint international action to save the French, whose position was becoming more desperate from day to day, and thus enable the Chinese to overrun Indo-China.

The Americans therefore felt that the real problem was to find means to scare off the Vietminh commander from advancing his forces further. On 12th January, 1954, Mr. Dulles gave U.S. strategy a "new look." He explained that it was now considered to be too costly to meet local aggression by direct local resistance and that a new and basic decision had therefore been taken to depend on America's "great capacity to retaliate instantly by means and at places of our choosing."

Unresponsive to criticisms of this speech by Canada's Foreign Minister, Mr. Lester Pearson, and by others, Mr. Dulles

on 29th March spoke of the imposition of Communism on South-East Asia as a threat to the free world which could not be "passively accepted and should be met by united action" that might involve "risks."

Nobody disputed that a Communist victory in Indo-China would transform the East-West strategic situation in South-East Asia, with grave repercussions on the balance of power throughout Asia: the difficulty was not the diagnosis but the treatment. In Korea, the issue had been simple; the aggressor could be identified at a glance: the Communist North Koreans had invaded the South. In Indo-China the issue was clouded. Most Asians, however anti-Communist, regarded the Vietminh as patriots who were trying to liberate their country from French imperialism. The case that could be stated against this was too complicated for most Asians to grasp. In any event, it was now years too late to try to put the case for armed U.N.O. defence of Indo-China on the basis of Communist aggression. The only way out seemed to Mr. Dulles to be a South-East Treaty Organisation along N.A.T.O. lines that would contain the Communists against overflowing the borders of Indo-China. He flew to London to discuss this with Eden on 11th April. Exactly what was said at this meeting is not known, but the evidence suggests that while Eden accepted the broad idea, he argued that a S.E.A.T.O. pact would be dangerous unless it had the full support of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon—the Colombo powers. It was precisely because the main burden of any military operation would necessarily fall on the U.S.A., Britain, Australia and New Zealand, that the agreement of the Colombo powers was vital, for without it any military operation would arouse Asian antagonism by appearing to be an old-fashioned imperialist war by Western powers on behalf of French, British or Dutch colonial interest. On 13th April, a communiqué was issued which after recounting and deploring the activities of the Communist forces in Indo-China concluded: "Accordingly we are ready to take part, with the other countries principally concerned, in an examination of the pos-

sibility of establishing a collective defence, within the framework of the charter of the United Nations, to assure the peace, security, and freedom of South-East Asia and the Western Pacific. It is our hope that the Geneva Conference will lead to the restoration of peace in Indo-China. We believe that the prospect of establishing a unity of defensive purpose throughout South-East Asia and the Western Pacific will contribute to an honourable peace in Indo-China."

This communiqué caused a major Anglo-American misunderstanding. To Eden, it seems to have meant that he was prepared to take part in an examination of the possibility of establishing a S.E.A.T.O. agreement. But it was vitally important in his view that the South-East Asian powers should be fully represented.

On the other hand, to Americans, "South-East Asia" means primarily Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines. The term "Colombo powers" is even resented by some Americans as implying a group of doubtful status and loyalty, not immediately amenable to U.S. leadership. It seemed important to Mr. Dulles to present Geneva with S.E.A.T.O. as a stern accomplished fact before the conference met, so that the tricky Communist negotiators would know what was coming to them if they refused reasonable terms in Indo-China.

The different assumptions underlying the British and American interpretations of the communiqué of 13th April apparently emerged for the first time when Eden learned that Mr. Dulles had summoned the "South-East Asian powers" (as defined in America) to meet in Washington on 20th April. He was alarmed and dismayed. All the evidence suggested (and subsequent events were to confirm) that India, as the most influential of the Colombo powers, would consider the best hope for South-East Asian peace to lie in a freely negotiated settlement at Geneva, and that to rush through a S.E.A.T.O. line-up beforehand would look like blackmail. Whatever the merits of this viewpoint, the fact remained that to respect it offered the only hope of enlisting the support of the Colombo

powers to uphold any Indo-Chinese settlement reached at Geneva. In daring to warn Mr. Dulles that he was in effect putting the S.E.A.T.O. cart before the Geneva horse, Eden must have realised that he was risking a first-class diplomatic incident. Moreover, the number and variety of authorities whose feelings can be outraged in Washington, and the vigour with which American senators and columnists rush to avenge any affront to the nation, causes such incidents to assume "bigger and better" proportions, with which the more inhibited champions of other affronted nations do not begin to compete.

Eden did not quail. He cabled his views to Mr. Dulles, who, although apparently boiling at what he regarded as treachery, felt compelled to transform the Washington meeting into one of the Korean war powers. Alistair Cooke reported in the *Manchester Guardian* of 26th June: "It is no secret that Mr. Eden and Mr. Dulles at this point had in common only the conviction that each was the injured party, and while Mr. Eden's long diplomatic experience enabled him to preserve a tense public silence, Mr. Dulles did not exhaust his chagrin until he had worked it off in a speech at Los Angeles." American Press comment about the British "Munichers" at Geneva became pointed and personal. But Anglo-American relations had not yet touched bottom.

Negotiations at Geneva were protracted, difficult and at moments acrimonious, and seemed to bear out American fears that the Chinese intended them merely as a series of delaying actions to cover the absorption of Indo-China. But Eden kept the conference together by masterly steering.

For Eden, the Indo-Chinese negotiations were in effect a salvage operation in which the Soviets and the Chinese held most of the cards. At home, the French Government was obviously unstable and actually fell when, halfway through the conference, M. Laniel was defeated and was replaced by Mr. Mendès-France. In Indo-China, French troops were in retreat. What the Chinese had to estimate was the extent to which they could stall in Geneva and batter the French in Indo-China

without exasperating American public opinion into armed intervention which might touch off a war whose consequences would be incalculable. A united Western front would have enabled the free world to extract a better bargain but the constantly increasing estrangement between the U.S.A. and Europe in general, and Britain in particular, impeded this.

During a critical pause in the conference in June when the outcome was in the balance, Eden, reporting to the Commons, used an expression which at the time seemed unwittingly to have struck at the roots of the whole post-war Anglo-American alliance. He reiterated the view that there could be no real security in South-East Asia without the goodwill and support of the free Asian countries. He hoped that there would be agreement on an international guarantee of any Indo-Chinese settlement and some system of South-East Asian defence, which might be a reciprocal arrangement in which both sides took part, such as Locarno, or it might be like N.A.T.O.

This apparently innocuous statement, made a few hours before the departure of Churchill and Eden by air for talks with the President and Mr. Dulles in Washington, caused the State Department to blench to its gills and senators to tear off their braces and declare a holy war against Britain. What was uppermost in Eden's mind in referring to Locarno was probably the new spirit in Franco-German relations which it had been hoped that treaty would herald, but all that the Americans remembered was that it had been torn up by Hitler with impunity. And, again, the suggestion seemed another insidious British attempt to secure recognition of the Peking régime. Some time before, Mr. Dulles had instructed the State Department to draw up a catalogue of Anglo-U.S. differences with the suggestion that America and Britain should continue to co-operate where they were in agreement, as, for example, over E.D.C. in Europe, but that consultations as between allies should no longer be regarded as normal in the vast areas where their views were apparently opposed, as in China, Japan, India, Indo-China, Burma, Persia, Iraq, Israel, and Egypt, and that

the U.S.A. should be free to reap the goodwill from her traditional "anti-colonial" policies where it suited her. These ideas were now widely canvassed in the U.S. press with no holds barred.

In such a poisoned atmosphere, the success of the White House talks was all the more remarkable and, in the eyes of any thoughtful observers left, enhanced the stature of the four statesmen concerned, as men of frankness and vision. It is true that the gaps between U.S. and British policy were not closed, but they were narrowed to manageable proportions, and the differences were often found to be more of emphasis or timing than of objective. The Locarno fiasco was cleared up when Mr. Dulles explained that his basic objection was that it would consecrate Communist control of East Europe (including parts of Germany and Austria) and of North Korea. It would end the hopes of captive peoples, such as the East Germans, and might in certain circumstances require the U.S.A. to use armed force against them. Eden had no difficulty in assuring him that nothing was further from his thoughts. All that he sought was a means to ensure that the Colombo powers underwrote whatever Indo-Chinese settlement could be reached in Geneva. On South-East Asian policy, the well-informed Washington commentator, Ernest Lindley, reported after the talks that despite some differences, Washington "does not doubt that Britain under its present Government, would fight if the Communists should again resort to clear-cut military aggression as they did in Korea. And of course, the British are bound by treaty to fight against any Communist aggression in the N.A.T.O. area. But British policy tends to be more flexible than ours, to seek adjustments by negotiation, to be wary of action which might lead to a war with China or the U.S.S.R."

From these talks there emerged the Potomac Charter, the sort of sonorously worded document that Churchill was adept at drafting. In addition to a reaffirmation of loyalty to U.N.O., the signatories "upheld the principle of self-government and would strive by peaceful means to secure independence for all

countries desirous and capable of sustaining an independent existence," which was prophylactic, in the American view, against any British relapse into Locarno-ism, and, in the British view against any upsurge of American "anti-colonial" exuberance.

Although Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles felt reassured by their talks with Churchill and Eden, there remained considerable differences between the administration and a substantial number of congressmen. As Churchill said in the Commons on 12th July, a gulf separated those who wanted peaceful co-existence with the Communist and non-Communist nations, and those who wished to extirpate the Communist fallacy. He applauded Mr. Eisenhower's declaration that the hope of the world lay in peaceful co-existence combined with vigilance, but, as the *Manchester Guardian* pointed out, what Churchill did not say was that this was precisely the gulf that separated Senator Knowland from Mr. Eisenhower, and that it was the Senator who was setting the pace of U.S. policy. He was trying to push the American people into approving a policy that would root the Communists out of China. Churchill told the House that he was "astonished" at the storm raised by Senator Knowland over China's possible admission to the U.N.O., because this was not an immediate issue and had not been prominent in his talks with the President. Churchill could hardly tell the Commons that this had occupied more attention in the U.S.A. than any other item on the agenda simply because Senator Knowland saw in it a way of forcing the President and Mr. Dulles to issue strong statements declaring their unalterable opposition to China's admission, but this seemed to be the truth.

At this moment, when M. Mendès-France had just become French Premier and was about to face Chou En-lai at Geneva under his own "settlement within a month or resign" terms, the solidarity of the representatives of the free world under the natural leadership of the U.S.A. seemed more than ever vital, but the uproar created by Senator Knowland and the congres-

sional anti-Communist extremists made Mr. Dulles feel that it would be politically unwise even to meet M. Mendès-France, let alone attend the Geneva conference. Not content to sulk in his tent, the American Achilles felt impelled to parade his wrath ostentatiously. It was only under the greatest personal pressure from M. Mendès-France, and Eden that Mr. Dulles was persuaded to offer M. Mendès-France a hasty last-minute splash of moral support by flying over to see him in Paris, and by conceding that Mr. Bedell Smith should return to Geneva as an observer, and that if an agreement which the U.S.A. could respect were reached, the U.S.A. would refrain from upsetting it and would regard any violation of it as a matter of grave concern.

The upshot was that the conference reached a cease-fire agreement within minutes of M. Mendès-France's 20th July deadline. Perhaps the best comment on the conference, and the most succinct, came from Mr. Eisenhower, who told newspaper men that if he were asked for an alternative to the Geneva agreements he had no better plan and he was therefore not going to criticise.

It was generally held that the Geneva conference had failed to produce a Korean settlement, but had succeeded in Indo-China. This view is at least open to question. In Korea, as the *Economist* pointed out, the Western powers were not compelled to accept the Communist terms for fear of suffering imminent military disaster; hence they resolutely maintained their position that Korea should be unified only after free elections under U.N. supervision—the same formula that, for the same reasons, they had maintained over the re-unification of Germany. The refusal of the Communists to agree meant in both cases that a stable existing position was maintained, since both sides knew that any serious trespass across the boundary meant war. The relatively confident feeling that prevailed about Korea arose from the belief that the Communists would not think it expedient to launch a new aggression there.

But in Indo-China the main reason why the Communists

refrained from driving the French into the sea was perhaps less the fear of U.S. intervention than confidence that they could achieve their aims less expensively by peaceful means, for in Indo-China the Western powers were in no position to insist on free, U.N. supervised elections. "The essential," said the *Economist*, "was to extricate a beaten army from a disastrous entanglement and to relieve the French people of a war which they no longer had the will to fight." With elections supervised only by a three-nation commission with one Communist member and an Indian chairman, conducted by the existing administrations, in a country divided in such a way that the majority of the population was under Vietminh control or influence, the result of the election due in 1956 seemed easy to forecast.

Were, then, the Americans right in attacking Eden as a "Municheer"? It is true that Eden's hope that the Colombo powers would join in a post-Genevan S.E.A.T.O. to resist any further attempt to overflow the frontiers of Vietnam was not realised, and that the toothless and truncated S.E.A.T.O. eventually signed at Manila on 8th September, 1954, aroused the passive antipathy of the Colombo powers, but if Eden had agreed to Mr. Dulles' plan of rushing any S.E.A.T.O. through to present Geneva with a threatening accomplished fact, it is arguable that the Colombo passive antipathy would have become active antagonism and that the Communists would have interpreted this as encouragement to take calculated risks which would have ended either in immediate and indiscriminate absorption of vast areas of South-East Asia, or in provoking that massive retaliation threatened by Mr. Dulles that would have sparked a major conflagration.

The conclusion seems that the diplomat may on occasion best promote his ultimate objects by choosing the lesser of two evils rather than by striking an attitude and exclaiming *fiat justitia, ruat coelum!*

CHAPTER 32

SALVAGE AND SETTLEMENT

THE RESULT of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement on the Suez Canal base signed on 19th October, 1954, confounded the gloomy prophecies of the small section of the Conservative Party whose criticisms contributed to embittering and delaying the settlement by confusing and needlessly antagonising Egyptian public opinion. To consolidate their régime the military junta which rescued Egypt from chaos in July, 1952, needed to hasten the evacuation of the canal zone; the longer that the British remained, the more insecure the government. Those Conservatives who denounced the "scuttle from Egypt" argued that the loss of the canal zone would be a blow at the security of the Commonwealth and that it would fatally undermine British prestige throughout the Middle East. Replying to the first point, Mr. Head, Secretary for War, told the Commons on 29th July, that the hydrogen bomb and nuclear weapons had revolutionised the strategic situation, rendering conceptions which were well-founded a year ago obsolete today. "Utterly obsolete," he repeated. Mr. Attlee extracted the maximum enjoyment for himself and his party by apt quotations from previous Labour and Tory speeches which suggested that the Tories had scorned all the arguments for evacuation that they now cited when the same arguments had been submitted to the House by the Labour Government and he claimed that the Tories had stupidly resisted a better agreement which might have been made with Egypt by the Labour Government.

Mr. Attlee's pungent phrases and telling irony scored a great Parliamentary success. It remained for Eden, without oratorical flourish, to show once again that he could marshal

the facts of his own brief, and detect the weak spots in his opponents', with impressive ease and authority. He reminded Mr. Attlee that his government had failed to get an agreement with Egypt and had had to raise the number of British troops to 80,000. That was the present government's heritage. Mr. Attlee had argued that the British departure would leave a vacuum in the Middle East. Eden replied that, on the contrary, the liberation of 80,000 men from the base would end the vacuum because they would form a strategic reserve available for use where needed. He underlined that bases on foreign soil are no longer tolerated and that what matters is mobility; this agreement would increase the mobility of our forces and add to their strength. Pithily he summed up the case against the Conservative rebels by saying "What we need is a working base, not a beleaguered garrison." Eden's speech clearly convinced the majority of his party which cheered him with greater enthusiasm than they had shown at any other time during this controversy, and it was also notable that the Opposition joined in the cheers.

The march of events was to disprove the loss-of-prestige argument. The canal agreement took the sting out of anti-British propaganda. The reactions of the Arab world suggested that by her realistic appreciation of changed conditions, Britain had shown the adaptability of her power and had enhanced rather than diminished her prestige. And it was a relief to those responsible for British interests and influence in the several Arab countries that the canal problem, which had always confused Anglo-Arab relations, was out of the way. It enabled Egypt at long last to co-operate freely on strategic matters with the West, with which her policies showed that her interests lay. Not least, the end of the Anglo-Egyptian quarrel made for stable conditions in Egypt by enabling the government to devote its energies to social needs.

The settlement on 5th October, 1954, of the dispute over Trieste was not only important in removing a major obstacle in Italo-Yugoslav co-operation for peace in the Mediterranean,

but was a significant example of Eden's diplomatic technique. In the course of long drawn negotiations, both Italy and Yugoslavia had had to yield points. On the other hand, neither was manœuvred into yielding more than its own public opinion would accept. In the course of his speech at the Conservative Party conference on 7th October, Eden congratulated the two countries on the end of their quarrel and said: "It is interesting to notice that this settlement was an example of a method of diplomacy which I prefer. This is in effect an open covenant, secretly arrived at [applause]. That is the way diplomacy should be done, and it is also an example of the closest possible Anglo-American co-operation. For eight months our Foreign Office representative and his American colleagues have worked almost daily with the Italian and Yugoslav ambassadors, and for at least six of those months no one knew anything about them [applause]. To all four of them the highest tributes are due."

In August, 1954, the languishing E.D.C. drama suddenly sprang into life and raced into a frenetic climax. Thrice invaded since 1870, France shivered in fear of a sovereign, re-armed Germany, while America insisted that West Germany, which in any case could not be kept disarmed and occupied by Allied forces indefinitely, must contribute to the defence of Western Europe. M. René Pleven sought to square the circle of German power and French weakness by a plan to create a common European army under the supranational control of a European Council. In other words, the proposal was that France must forgo some part of her own sovereignty and control over her own armed forces in order to render Germany innocuous by ensuring that she did the same. Britain made it clear that she was ready to give a European army the fullest possible support short of entering a European union. Although M. Pleven's scheme was warmly supported by an influential minority in France, opinion in the country as a whole was strongly divided, so that as time passed and a military threat

from the U.S.S.R. seemed less imminent, France began to look M. Pleven's gift horse more and more in the mouth. She asked for a series of reassurances to cover gaps in the practical working of the plan. But every time fresh assurances were given, the French brought new gaps to light, while further delays were caused by the instability of French ministries. At length, France found in M. Mendès-France a Premier with sufficient moral courage and political *savoir faire* to compel France to take seriously her responsibilities towards Europe and to compel Europe to realise that E.D.C., unless substantially modified, had no hope of acceptance by French public opinion. He explained this to a meeting of the six E.D.C. powers in Brussels on 19th August, 1954, and said that if E.D.C. was submitted to the French National Assembly in its present form it would be defeated, his government would fall, and would probably be followed by a Popular Front ministry (i.e., one including Communists). This, he said, would mean a crisis in the North Atlantic Defence System and a great success for the Communists with nothing to set against it. The E.D.C. powers made an effort to meet M. Mendès-France's proposals, which would in effect have refurbished French sovereignty at the expense of German, but were unable to satisfy him, for to have done so would have involved them in a virtual reversal of their own policies and would have compromised their parliamentary positions.

M. Mendès-France then faced the French National Assembly with its own responsibilities by allowing a free vote on the E.D.C. treaty which was rejected on 29th August by 319 to 264, with 43 abstentions.

The international crisis thus precipitated was the gravest that Europe, and indeed the free world, had faced since the end of the war. The basic problem was to overcome the traditional mutual suspicion of France and Germany in order that they, the two strongest continental powers outside the Iron Curtain, should be free to co-operate with Britain and the U.S.A., and the rest of Europe, in containing the U.S.S.R. and its satellites.

In deciding to enlist Western Germany wholeheartedly on the side of free Europe, Dr. Adenauer's difficulty had been to offer his fellow-countrymen a policy which would allay their fears that alliance with the West meant the permanent partition of Germany. He had "sold" E.D.C. to his own people as the answer to Germany's problems. The E.D.C. treaty was not only a constellation of security pacts and mutual guarantees which wove the policies of the six signatories into a common pattern with those of Britain and America, but was also a European *mystique* which would find its apotheosis in a genuine European federation. The immediate result of France's rejection of E.D.C. was to create both a political and an ideological vacuum. Overnight, the all-European policy of the six European powers, Britain and the U.S.A., carefully built up over the years, lay in ruins, and ideologically there seemed nothing to take its place. The danger was that the general disillusionment with the idea of West European unity, as the answer to the U.S.S.R. and Communism, would be exploited by all the forces of the political oppositions in France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere. It should not be forgotten that in several of these countries there were solid blocks of Communist votes. The danger was, further, that the present majority in the U.S.A. that valued European freedom and co-operation would, in the confusion and disillusionment of U.S. public opinion, yield ground to that section which had always been impatient with, and distrustful of, Europe's traditional divisions and animosities.

Mr. Dulles's reverberating warning of 14th December, 1953, that if E.D.C. were not ratified the U.S.A. might be forced to make an "agonising reappraisal" had failed to achieve the desired result. It was notable that every American attempt to galvanise the French National Assembly into some kind of action by threat had in fact only paralysed it with resentment. After France's rejection of E.D.C., the obvious next step was a conference of the powers primarily affected to see what alternatives might be possible. At first the State Department

thought of an emergency meeting of the N.A.T.O. council until they remembered that it would be M. Mendès-France's turn to be chairman. Thereupon, so angry were they at what they seem to have regarded as his treachery, that they let the proposal drop, nor did a suggestion received from Eden that a nine-power conference be held at once in London find immediate favour. The State Department, hoist with its own petard, was as paralysed by its own agonies of reappraisal as the French Assembly had been.

Statesmanship, it has been said, is not merely the pursuit of the ideal within the bounds of the practicable, it is also the constant effort to extend those bounds. Up to 30th August, the pursuit of the ideal had, for Eden, been to promote the French ratification of E.D.C., but from the moment of the National Assembly's rejection, Eden saw that it was immediately necessary—a matter not of weeks but of days—to extend the bounds of the practicable to find a substitute for E.D.C. Since Washington was apparently too emotional to face an immediate conference, Eden decided that, as drift would be fatal, he must take the initiative himself by soundings in the E.D.C. chancelleries. He thought that he saw the germ of a possible substitute for E.D.C. in the dormant Consultative Council for common defence embodied in the Brussels treaty (among Britain, France and the Benelux countries) of March, 1948, to which could be added the admission of Germany to N.A.T.O., which contained a European army within its framework.

No one could have been more conscious than Eden that his formula would probably be torn to pieces—it was full of gaps and unresolved difficulties. Germany could not be admitted to the Brussels treaty or to N.A.T.O. without French consent. Would the French Assembly intransigently insist that a re-armed Germany *must* be subject to control? Neither treaty would wholly cover that. Without E.D.C. the only hope was for Germany to accept some form of voluntary restriction on the size of her army and on the types of its weapons and for France to accept her pledged word. What a hope! These

treaties would not satisfy Germany's primary demand for equality of treatment and France's for security—for reassurance that, Britain and the U.S.A. having withdrawn their troops from Europe, France would not be left along with a sovereign, rearmed and almighty Germany. Eden's formula did not effectively revive and uphold the European *mystique*, and it left out Scandinavian participation. No one knew better than Eden that every one of the ideas that he was turning over in his mind would risk scorn or rejection by as many nations as would accept them. Was he then to throw up his hand and do nothing? Or was he to make yet another effort to re-sort the existing possibilities so that they might be transformed into an extension of the boundaries of the practicable? In deciding on his course, Eden must have reckoned that he had one important imponderable factor in his favour: the E.D.C. countries had received such a shock from its rejection, and the outlook was so full of tremendous and awful possibilities, that they would probably be only too willing to jump at almost any alternative put before them—and his experience must have told him that it was vital to exploit their sense of shock while it lasted. Within a short time it would be too late to get back into some semblance of their former positions the pieces that had been upset when the French Assembly jolted the chessboard.

Eden cabled his ideas to Washington and without waiting for a reply flew off to Brussels (11th September), and Bonn (13th September), Rome (14th September), leaving the most difficult interview to the last—Paris (15-16th September).

As the reactions to Eden talks began coming in from the European capitals, American public opinion was favourably impressed and, in the State Department, which was becoming more and more anxious over the signs that Dr. Adenauer's opponents were rallying their forces, there was "unconcealed gratitude" for Eden's initiative. By 14th September, Mr. Dulles himself felt that it was time that he took a hand in Eden's con-

sultations and thus bring American influence to bear in support of Eden's substitute for E.D.C. Eden welcomed the idea, but he must have been taken aback when he learnt that Mr. Dulles intended to confer only with him and Dr. Adenauer. To fly especially across the Atlantic at a few hours' notice, for consultations of the highest importance and not to see M. Mendès-France was to administer one of the most public diplomatic affronts ever offered to the nation without whose goodwill no "European" solution was possible. But Mr. Dulles was still obsessed with "shot-gun" methods whereby "lessons" were taught to recalcitrants. Mr. Dulles's tactics received a universally bad press in Europe, of which the *Manchester Guardian's* comment was typical: "Mr. Eden's task has been made a great deal more difficult by the sudden visit to Europe of Mr. Dulles who is going to Bonn but not to Paris. Whatever his intention, the omission of Paris looks like a studied insult to France. If he has time for Bonn, why not Paris? The French may conclude that Mr. Dulles has come to ask his good friend Dr. Adenauer whether the Eden proposals are entirely satisfactory to Germany, but that he cares nothing for French opinion. Coming after his boycott of the Geneva conference, it cannot help."

However, after these wobbly moments, the upshot of Eden's tour, and Mr. Dulles's *tour de force*, was the summoning on 28th September of a conference in London of the foreign ministers of France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, the U.S.A., Canada and Britain. The conference began by the obvious step of electing as its chairman the man who had made its meeting possible, Eden. And Eden, pursuing his own variety of shock tactics, chose the right moment to make the dramatic announcement that Britain would continue to maintain on the mainland of Europe the effective strength of the U.K. forces currently assigned to the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, four divisions and a tactical air force, or whatever the Supreme Commander regarded as equivalent.

Britain undertook not to withdraw these forces against the wishes of the majority of the Brussels treaty powers, subject only to the understanding that an acute oversea emergency might oblige withdrawal without prior consultation.

"What I have announced," said Eden, "is, for us, a formidable step. You all know that ours is an island story . . . whatever the facts of modern weapons and strategy may compel."

For once, the newspaper reporters' cliché could be accurately applied: Eden's offer created a sensation. The other foreign ministers sat round the conference table dumb with amazement for a moment. M. Spaak was the first to grasp the full significance of Britain's new effort to remove France's fear of isolation in the face of a rearmed Germany. The silence of the conference was broken by his stentorian whisper to M. Mendès-France: "*Vous avez gagné.*"

The real reasons for Britain's reluctance to take this step, the *Observer* pointed out, were not military. Those responsible for Britain's defence had long known that, as long as Britain's allies felt themselves seriously threatened, it was unrealistic to envisage the withdrawal of British forces from the continent. Nor was it true that the other members of the Commonwealth objected to closer ties with Europe. The real objection had arisen from Britain's relations with the U.S.A. It was felt that the world-wide Anglo-American partnership was of unique value and that any step that tied Britain more closely to Europe than the Americans were ready to tie themselves would weaken this unique position of mutual influence and trust. But the history of the years since Korea suggested that it was a mistake to believe that British influence in America depended on British aloofness from Europe. They suggested rather that Britain would be listened to in America if she could speak not only (as at Geneva) as the friend of India but also (as at the London conference) as the initiator in shaping the policies of Europe.

In effect, the London Nine-Power Conference announced

(1) the intention of Britain, France and the U.S.A. to end the occupation of Western Germany, (2) the decision of the Brussels treaty powers (Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg) to admit Germany and Italy to a greatly developed Brussels system; (3) agreement by the eight N.A.T.O. powers that Germany should join them; and (4) Germany's declaration she would voluntarily limit her arms production. Other outstanding points that emerged were that whereas under the old N.A.T.O./E.D.C. pacts Britain was associated with the six Western European powers but not institutionally bound to them, now she became a full member of a supranational military system alongside the six. Britain's status now differed for the first time from that of Canada and the U.S.A. Secondly, whereas under E.D.C. Germany was a "self-integrating member of an embryonic continental federation," she now became a conventional sovereign state in an alliance. Thirdly, France, who had hitherto agreed only that there should be joint E.D.C./N.A.T.O. meetings, now made the entirely new concession that Germany should join the N.A.T.O. club. Even the most advanced French "Europeans," it was pointed out, had hitherto hesitated to propose immediate German N.A.T.O. membership. In the complex of agreements, called Western European Union (a wishful title—since the whole was in reality an old-fashioned alliance of powers), Britain would share until 1998 in a continental military organisation which set up supranational controls over the manufacture and stocks of arms, and in which a resurrected national German army and General Staff responsible to the German government would have its sovereign place. It was also agreed by the Nine Powers that forces placed under the Supreme Commander "shall be deployed in accordance with N.A.T.O. strategy."

Summing up the lessons of the London conference the *Observer* said: "The British Government's declaration of its willingness permanently to commit the bulk of our home defences to the defence of Europe will rank as one of the great

decisions by which British policy aligned itself with the facts of the twentieth century. If the conference succeeds, the calling and steering of it will prove the greatest among Mr. Eden's many achievements of this year—the outstanding year of his career.”

CHAPTER 33

ASCENT OF THE SUMMIT

SIX DAYS after the London conference, the Conservative Party received Eden at its annual conference with one of the greatest acclamations ever accorded one of its leaders. Eden replied to debates on foreign policy, defence and Germany.

"For Mr. Eden personally it was a momentous debate," said the *Manchester Guardian*. "He cannot have had the slightest interest in the arguments advanced in praise of the Government, but he must have valued the chorus of praise as a sign of his power. Mr. Eden has in recent months been considering the proposal that he should give up the Foreign Office for more domestic duties—leadership of the House and the tenancy of a sinecure—but it would be astonishing if he surrendered the authority he now exercises over the Conservative Party as a Foreign Secretary for anything less than the highest post. To enter into yet another probationary period of no fixed length as a domestic minister would be to expose himself to dangerous political hazards, with no compensating gain."

In their reviews of the year 1954, virtually every journal and commentator paid handsome tributes to Eden whose hand was seen in every major diplomatic event—and *The Times* soberly summed up the general consensus in saying, "All this could not have been accomplished without Eden's adroit diplomacy, and when in October he was created a Knight of the Garter it was an honour truly earned."

It was certainly a mark of high Royal favour as well as of Royal awareness of a great achievement that this famous Order of Chivalry should be accorded to her Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs while he was still in mid-career. Normally—

and even then very rarely—it was conferred on elder statesmen at the end of their labours. Perhaps the nearest analogy was the Garter for Austen Chamberlain after Locarno. It could be said that the London agreement twenty-eight years later was but a variation on the same theme—how to bring back Germany into the comity of Europe.

Thanks to Eden's skill and resourcefulness, we had seen a renaissance of classical diplomacy. This is not to imply that the millennium was at hand. The professional diplomatist, as opposed to the impatient amateur, is undaunted by problems because he does not expect ever to have finished with them. He assumes that the solution of one set of difficulties must of itself create new problems. His aim is to keep international relations in a constantly changing equilibrium like the slowly evolving pattern of a kaleidoscope. The statesman, as opposed to the professional politician, provides the idealism and the belief in the possibility of progress which uses diplomacy as a means to an end: it is the constant effort to extend the bounds of the practicable in the pursuit of the ideal, which is Eden's greatest claim to statesmanship.

Just when it seemed that Europe had risen from the abyss, France faltered again. In spite of Mendès-France's sombre warning that if the agreements were rejected France would no longer have any weight in the Atlantic Alliance, the National Assembly on Christmas Eve threw out by 280 votes to 259, the first clause of the ratification bill relating to the setting up of the Western European Union. Apart from its impact on the free world, this decision apparently came as a severe shock to the Assembly itself. The Deputies had been under the impression that the matter was duly fixed and that Mendès-France would get a majority, although a small one, to enable him to carry on but at the same time recognise that he was in office on probation. In face of this pitiful chicanery, Eden did not hesitate. Without waiting upon the reactions of Allies or Cabinet colleagues, he authorised the Foreign Office to issue the following dramatic Christmas Eve message: "The Paris

treaties are still under discussion in the French Chamber, and there is to be a further vote on Monday. It is clear that what is at stake is the unity of the western allies. The rejection of the Paris agreements would not mean that German rearmament would not take place. The issue is not whether the German Federal Republic will rearm, but how. The United Kingdom commitment offered at the London Conference to maintain British forces on the Continent of Europe depends on the ratification of the Paris agreements by all parties."

This represents perhaps the toughest warning he was ever to deliver to a friendly government in time of peace. President Eisenhower also issued a statement expressing grave concern, but it was in somewhat softer tone. Some critics felt that Eden's reaction was hasty and that he had allowed his temper to override his judgment. The anti-European elements in the French Assembly could be relied upon to denounce British interference, ingratitude or discourtesy. But however much he might be hurting Gallic feelings, his experience clearly told him that the moment had arrived to discourage, once and for all, any hopes their vote might arouse among the Deputies of squeezing out some further concessions for France whether in the Saar, with armament guarantees or by some other means.

On the German side, Adenauer's position was dangerously compromised by the vote. A blood-transfusion was needed for him. The statement left the Deputies with nothing but stark reality; they would now have to consult their consciences and France's interests in the knowledge beyond equivocation of where Britain stood.

A week later on the 30th December, the Assembly found ways and means of changing its mind and passing the vote of confidence in the Bill approving Western Union by a majority of 27 votes. Technically and indeed, politically, the battle was still not over. Mendès-France, the most formidable leader thrown up by the fourth Republic, was running into ever increasing difficulties with the party groups comprising his coalition, and with the Assembly as a whole. They were suspicious

of his "new broom" methods, his popularity and appeals to the people over the heads of Parliament. His very adroitness in leaving the Assembly and not the Government to take the decision about E.D.C. had aroused enmity and exposed him to vengeance. Experts judged that the days of the Government were numbered. They were right. On the 5th February his Government fell on a vote of confidence on its North Africa policy. The deed was done by a coalition of interests ranging from Communists to Gaullists and including twenty members of Mendès-France's own party who either voted against or abstained.

Once again the European agreement was in jeopardy. Nearly three weeks passed while would-be Prime Ministers in search of followers failed to find majorities or form governments. Finally the Radical Socialist, Edgar Faure, Mendès-France's Foreign Minister, broke the deadlock, but it was not until another month of fierce debating, concession-mongering and hard bargaining had gone by that the four treaties embodying the European agreement were, on the 27th March, unconditionally approved. Faure was only able to conjure up agreement by elaborating a five-point declaration of the policy which the Faure government would follow after ratification.

One of these points was to arrange, as soon as possible, an East/West conference on all problems "which it seems possible to resolve."

It will be recalled that Churchill's initial support for such a meeting "at the summit" had been in some measure identified with the impression that Malenkov, as Stalin's successor, was in a mood or position to give a "new look" to Soviet foreign policy. The fall of Beria, the Police Chief, within six months of Stalin's death, gave rise to wide-spread speculation that a war of succession within the Kremlin could now be expected. After just on two years of apparent supremacy came the no less sudden and dramatic announcement of Malenkov's resignation and confession of inadequacy, together with his replacement by Bulganin as Prime Minister. It also became clear that

Krushchev, the Communist Party Secretary, had emerged as the real master.

It was generally conceded that this development was unfavourable for the prospects of peaceful co-existence, and there were not wanting critics who attributed the real reason for the changes in Russia to the policy of German rearmament and inclusion in N.A.T.O.

On the 1st March, Churchill in a massive oration, declared that Britain must have an effective "defence by deterrent" policy, which meant nuclear weapons of the highest quality and on an appreciable scale with the means of delivery. In the light of this declaration and in advance of the French decision on the Paris agreement, the Labour Party a fortnight later called for immediate talks between the heads of the three major Powers. Churchill was able to reject this proposal on the grounds that the Soviet Government would clearly not agree except on the basis of a further postponement of treaty ratification, which was out of the question. After revealing an abortive suggestion he had made to Molotov in the summer of 1954 for a friendly high-level Anglo-Soviet meeting, he ended with the warning that to have such a conference "at an ill-chosen moment or in unfavourable circumstances would raise false hopes and probably finish by leaving things far worse than before." Time was in fact everything, and it was felt that on this whole subject the rest would be silence.

Ever since his illness which caused the postponement of the Bermuda Conference in 1953, it was widely felt that Churchill was only holding on to the Premiership out of the hope that he could render a final consummating service to mankind, and by personal encounter with the American President and the Soviet Prime Minister, seek to put aside the use of the H-bomb and thereby help to ease the world's fears and tensions.

Against the background of these momentous developments in Europe Eden left for what was generally conceded might well be his final Grand Tour as Foreign Secretary. It was in every respect timely and enabled him to make invaluable first-

hand appreciations in half a dozen countries in the Middle and Far East all of which were in varying degree affected by the pressures of the cold war. The primary purpose of the tour was to take part in Bangkok in a meeting of the signatory Powers of S.E.A.T.O. The Indo-China settlement was still precarious. Now a new danger not officially on the conference agenda threatened to flare up beyond local control—Formosa. On 24th January, President Eisenhower appreciating that there was an early risk of a major assault by the Chinese Communists sought, and on the next day decisively obtained, authority for measures “which would contemplate the use of the armed forces if necessary to assure the security of Formosa and the Pescadores.” Regarded as a show of strength, the President’s move was to raise as many questions and doubts as it settled. How far would America go to defend the islands off the Chinese mainland which were occupied by the Chinese Nationalists? How far were these islands strategically and politically defensible? And how far, again, was action envisaged under United Nations auspices? Attlee, who had recently visited China on a Labour Party delegation, hastened to assert in the House of Commons on 26th January that it was quite clear that “intervention in a civil war” was involved. Eden in reply said he could not agree that the position of the coastal islands was in any way comparable to that of Formosa, and pointed out that Formosa had not been a part of China for over half a century, whereas the islands had at all times been recognised as belonging to the mainland. Politically, morally and juridically it was a tangled situation, made more so by the pretensions of Chiang Kai-shek, the Nationalist leader, and the influential pressures of the so-called “China Lobby” in America itself. Eden told Parliament frankly that he recognised the Formosa problem as being “one of the most difficult he had ever seen in the international situation.”

On 4th February, in a written statement, he set out the British attitude to the tangled position of Formosa itself and the clearer legal position of the off-shore islands. Although the

latter "undoubtedly form part of the territory of the People's Republic of China," any attempt by that Government "to assert its authority over those islands by force would, in the circumstances at present peculiar to the case, give rise to a situation endangering peace and security, which is properly a matter of international concern." Under cover of the President's message to Congress and the guns of the American Seventh Fleet, Nationalist forces were evacuated from the Tachen Islands. More immediately dangerous, however, was their continued occupation of Quemoy and Matsu, which directly covered Amoy and Foochow, possible ports of concentration for attack on Formosa. The S.E.A.T.O. meeting enabled Eden to have a full informal review with Commonwealth ministers concerned as well as with Mr. Dulles, who was always more amenable and coherent in private than he seemed to be in some of his public performances. Formosa could not fail to bring out the different perspectives in which Britain and America saw the Asian situation. Following an important conference in Singapore with British diplomats in the area, Eden put the position clearly. Broadcasting from Kuala Lumpur he stressed that the basis of British policy in Asia was recognition of the changes which had taken place and acceptance of the Asian countries' wish to develop their lives in their own way. While the object of the Bangkok meeting was to attempt to draw certain clear defensive lines—for which Britain could not be blamed after her experiences—she was equally anxious to work with nations who did not share her views on such security arrangements.

On 8th March, he was able to put to Parliament a progress report of his manifold efforts for peace and security. He said that in the Middle East he had found a general acceptance of need "to organise a safe shield against aggression from without" and it was particularly satisfactory that he had been able to discuss with the Premier of Iraq possible British accession to the Iraq-Turkish Pact. Almost his last act as Foreign Secretary was to announce on the 30th March a new agreement with Iraq and adherence the next day to the Iraq-Turkish Pact. In answer

to a question about the position of Israel, Eden was able to underline the diplomatic achievement involved—it was “a truly desirable development because that is the first time an Arab State is looking in directions other than simply towards Israel.”

In the second week of March rumours spread, touched off in the Beaverbrook Press—usually an inspired source for Churchillian gossip—that the great decision had been taken that Churchill would in a matter of days resign, and Eden at last succeed him.

The British National Press had no sooner delivered themselves of this intelligence than they ceased to be delivered. One of the greatest news stories of our time took place to an accompaniment of muffled drums and muted trumpets. At first it was suggested that Churchill, the most Press-conscious of Prime Ministers, would wait until the newspapers were on the streets again before leaving Downing Street. Then this was denied as being a wholly unworthy suggestion. Then followed a strange and disquieting Parliamentary incident described in the *Manchester Guardian's* headlines as “Differences about Four Power talks—should they be at summit or lower levels?—Sir Winston's views.” In answer to a Parliamentary question Churchill simply re-stated his belief in a meeting at the highest level without an agenda before meetings at lower levels—“there might be a better chance of success if the initiative came from the summit.” “Unless,” commented the *Manchester Guardian*, “he was speaking as an individual—which is hardly possible for the Prime Minister—his statement implied a continuing difference with the United States.” But of more immediate speculative interest was its direct conflict with Eden's reply to a Parliamentary question the day before in which he said that the Government was consulting with its allies as to the methods by which Four Power talks might be held once the Paris agreements were ratified. The procedure the Government proposed to follow would include meetings “maybe in the first instance on

the official level, and then at the Foreign Ministers' level, and then probably other levels also if all goes well."

There was to be no opportunity to pursue this riddle further. The sense remained, however, that Churchill ever since the death of Stalin, had reached some broad conclusion on the timing and treatment of Anglo-Soviet negotiations which left him in splendid isolation from most of his colleagues and advisers on the subject. This was a situation both in office and out of it to which Churchill was well accustomed. As coalition leader in wartime he had taken the measure of dissenting colleagues. Now, having expressed his true thoughts on high policy, he was ready to depart.

There followed in quick succession the famous Royal Dinner Party at No. 10 with Churchill and Eden, both resplendent in knee breeches and the Order of the Garter; the Tuesday audience; the brief announcement of resignation from Buckingham Palace and the feeling it brought of the passing of grandeur from our lives—the lack of newspapers seemed if anything to heighten the sense of world drama and personal loss.

A crowd gathered outside the Foreign Office waiting for Eden to be summoned that night, but it was not until the next morning—Wednesday, 6th April—that in top hat and morning coat, he drove to the Audience at which the Queen, exercising her Royal prerogative, offered him the post of Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury. "The Right Honourable Sir Anthony Eden accepted Her Majesty's offer and kissed hands upon his appointment."

In the same afternoon he made his first appearance in the House of Commons as Prime Minister. The tribute he paid to Churchill and the greetings he himself received were warm and spontaneous. Walter Elliot gave perhaps the deepest pleasure by claiming that if the House had lost one of the greatest front benchers in all its history, the back benchers had gained the greatest back bencher of all time. Eden's first words as Prime Minister were in praise of Churchill. He saw him still as the dominant figure. Referring to his great passion, political life,

he said he brought to it the most complete vision. No man that he had known could make one understand at the same time the range of a problem and come straight to its core. He believed this attribute would be placed first among his many gifts. There was a pleasant exchange of wit between Attlee and Eden—evidence of the club atmosphere of Parliament which the rigours of the modern party system cannot wholly dissipate. "We shall all wish him health and strength," remarked Attlee, "but on this side, of course, we cannot wish him a long tenure. It was the Opposition's duty, as soon as opportunity offered, to try and give Sir Anthony a period of rest. But, as a Mr. Young said to Lord Melbourne when that statesman was hesitating to accept the Premiership, 'Why, damn it all, such a position was not held by any Greek or Roman, and if it only lasts three months it will have been worth while to have been Prime Minister of England.' "

"I enjoyed very much," Eden retorted, "the Melbourne reflection. The Right Honourable gentleman will not, however, I think, have forgotten that Melbourne though always talking of leaving office continued to stay there a very long time indeed."

Linked with speculation over a change of Prime Minister were guesses about the date of a General Election and the nature of a Cabinet reshuffle. The Beaverbrook Press rashly asserted that the former would be in June, and the latter strictly limited, with Eden doubling up in the Foreign Secretaryship. The Cabinet changes released some 48 hours after Eden had taken office were, in fact, on a larger scale than anticipated, but, with one exception, they were probable appointments. Macmillan as Foreign Secretary in succession to Eden, Selwyn Lloyd as Minister of Defence and Reginald Maudling as Minister of Supply were all men who might expect to have a growing role to play in an Eden régime. The surprise selection was Lord Home for Commonwealth Relations. As Lord Dunglass, he had acted as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Neville Chamberlain, holding that post at the time of Eden's resignation. Perhaps it is that Home is regarded as well equipped for

high-level liaison work and that Munich is now fading from the Conservative memory.

Churchill's administrations were flanked by a strong contingent of friends and relations. They were not necessarily the worse for that; but there had also been a change in the political status of some of the offices of State. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the three Service Ministers, for example, had lost some of their pre-war ranking, while the old sinecure posts of Lord Privy Seal and President of the Council, free of departmental responsibility, were raised up either as co-ordinators or members of the inner ring.

Given a full term of office Eden may be expected perhaps to return to more orthodox procedures and delegate more authority to his senior specialist ministers. Of these, three stand out in political stature: R. A. Butler, Harold Macmillan and Lord Salisbury. Closest to him perhaps is Salisbury, who, as Lord Cranborne and Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, had resigned alongside Eden with such powerful effect in 1938. Neither Butler, an outstandingly able second-in-command, nor Macmillan have quite the same close personal or political affinities. The situation in terms of balance of power is perhaps more closely comparable with Attlee's Labour than Churchill's Conservative administration, and recalls the position of the triumvirate of Cripps, Morrison and Bevin. Any one of these three was big enough to be in his Chief's position, but could not exercise enough authority to take over without support of the other two. Such support, however, owing to various stresses and loyalties was never in fact forthcoming. The very strength of these subordinates helped to reinforce Attlee's own position. The same situation could conceivably apply to Eden. It was from the outset a source of power to Bonar Law, who, on becoming Leader of the Conservative Party, once confessed to a friend, "If they want me to go, they always know that I will"—a declaration of intention that constituted a sufficient threat to keep him in harness until the end of his life!

It was at first thought that Eden's Cabinet reshuffle might

mean a decision to defer a General Election. The Government's five-year term is not complete until October, 1956, but a convention of the constitution seems to have grown up which argues that the five-year term must be reduced to four to avoid a prolonged pre-election atmosphere. Whatever the merits of this trend, Eden's decision in favour of an immediate appeal was characteristically clear cut. The balance of national, Party and personal advantage could fairly be said to rest in seeking a fresh mandate and larger majority for the tasks ahead.

EPILOGUE

IT WAS no easy task to follow Churchill whether as Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition or of the Conservative Party. It is important to realise, however, that Eden's enduring popularity is not of Churchillian origin. Even before the war opinion polls gave Eden a majority over all other competitors put together—Churchill included—as the man whom the country most wanted to succeed Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister. It is of course true to say that as Churchill's nominated deputy Eden's status and reputation have enjoyed special protection. But at the same time Churchill's towering leadership has so comprehensively dominated the scene that too protracted an apprenticeship under so formidable a personality could have ended in stifling the apprentice. It is probable therefore that the succession reverted to Eden only just in time before his ambition was blunted and his will to lead sapped. Eden has had to fight a real handicap in reaching the top too soon and then being the heir apparent too long. In both cases he has been at one remove from effective power. During the pre-war period he was sacrificed to Baldwin's double thinking and to Chamberlain's single aim. Under Churchill there was for several years no power to wield; his role of Foreign Secretary during the war was really that of a Minister of State to Churchill, who was decisively in charge of all policy affecting the war, particularly in regard to Germany. To Eden was assigned all other foreign policy. He dealt with Turkey for example until Turkey actually joining the Allies became an issue of direct concern to Churchill. In the latter stages of the war at the great conferences and at meetings with Roosevelt

and Stalin, Eden's views began to carry independent weight, but with victory he was swept from office.

While Eden and Churchill are now inextricably linked in history the influence of Baldwin, who laid the foundations of his career, should not be overlooked. Baldwin is still a controversial name and awaits the verdict of history, but in two respects his leadership sets precedents which Eden may feel by temperament and training inclined to follow. In the first place Baldwin was a conciliator and he endeavoured to keep British politics out of totalitarian conflicts abroad and class compartments at home. "I am anti-socialist," he once declared, "but I face left in my anti-socialism." This seems a role which Eden may be able to play with perhaps deeper conviction than either Churchill or Chamberlain before him. Secondly, Baldwin was all along conscious of the need to be close to mass opinion. He carried that doctrine too far, until like the Duke of Plaza Toro he led the regiment from behind. Eden, it seems, is equally aware of the importance of frequent feeling of the public pulse.

His attitude to politics is essentially empirical. His belief in the League of Nations before the war and support for regional internationalism after it has never been starry-eyed idealism, but based on practical and expert considerations.

Throughout his career he has been a good House of Commons man, an acute debater, and a master of his brief. Apart from Churchill himself he is by far the most experienced Conservative statesman. He has enjoyed high-level relations with every leading European figure over the past 25 years. He has been in the front rank of world diplomacy even longer than Molotov, who significantly broke through the Iron Curtain to congratulate him on his elevation.

His oratory lacks distinction of style and delivery. There are no Churchillian echoes or undertones; it is penny-plain speaking. This, however, is not a criticism; a lucid expression of the commonplace is a most important contribution to political life, and is not to be confused with the delivery of platitudes.

In the last analysis it is the resources of character that uphold

men bearing great burdens. Here Eden has stood the test. There is general testimony to the charm of his personality; but he is also tough. Lord Winterton has spoken of his choleric disposition. Others have picked upon his capacity to keep an undoubtedly strong temper under control. Parliament acknowledges a fighter and admires him if he is belligerent on things that matter. One Member of Parliament put it to me that on the principle that out of evil cometh good, Eden's illness may have come at the right time. For it served as a great warning to him in middle age with his relentless and self-dedicating energy to give himself time to turn round, to think and to relax.

The size of a man is often to be measured by his capacity to delegate. If this master of the techniques of skilled diplomacy can now share out power and responsibility among colleagues and rise above his own expertise he will indeed have fulfilled himself. His own Party have no doubts about him judged by the enthusiastic reception accorded to him when he entered Church House on 22nd April, 1955, there to receive the acclamation of over a thousand Conservative Peers, Members of Parliament, candidates and officials on being elected Leader of the Party.

In the words of R. A. Butler, who seconded the resolution for his adoption, "I have had the honour of working with him for 25 years. . . . I am perfectly clear that he has three great qualities for leadership. The first is courage, the second is integrity and the third is flair."

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